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FEBRUARY 6, 1967 *35 cents*

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LETTERS

too much gravy

Long Island City, N. Y.

DEAR SIRS: R. A. Musgrave's thoughtful piece ["National Taxes and Local Needs," *The Nation*, Jan. 16] omits any mention of the main objection to sharing federal tax collections with the states. That is the prevalence of corruption in the state legislatures. Aside from the few housekeeping chores they perform (the licensing of saloons and doctors, and the extraction of loyalty oaths from suspect occupations such as teaching), the states are chiefly engaged in the manufacture of gravy for the politicians and their businessmen friends. . . . My best guess is that not more than one-tenth of returned federal taxes would be applied to stated purposes. . . .

Emmett Swisshelm

communications gap

Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIRS: Douglass Cater, of Mr. Johnson's staff, informs me that he has never suggested that U.S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe II should clear his speeches with the White House.

The quote attributed to him in "Guidelines to Frustration" [*The Nation*, Jan. 16] was given to me by a responsible member of Mr. Howe's staff who said that he was present when the remark was made. Mr. Cater insists that my informant misunderstood him.

Robert Sherrill

Jews in Russia

New York City

DEAR SIRS: In his article ["Kosygin in Paris: Differences Within Amity," *The Nation*, Dec. 26], Alexander Werth writes with astonishing presumption that only "a minority of old-fashioned, orthodox or Israel-conscious Jews" resent the measures taken by the Soviet Government against Jewish cultural expression, and that "approximately 2 million Jews (of the less than 3 million in the country) . . . do not in the main want to rank as Jews." I cannot imagine what authority Mr. Werth has for this allegation. . . .

Those of us who seek wider rights for Soviet Jews frequently are confronted with the argument that we have no mandate from Soviet Jewry. . . . And it is true that there is no way of knowing adequately the desire of Soviet Jews except by a host of inferences. We don't know, and neither does Mr. Werth. This indeed is our principal complaint. There is no permitted address for Soviet Jews, there is no central organization, no representative body, no one to ask.

Soviet authorities insist that the paucity of Jewish facilities in the USSR reflects a lack of desire among Soviet Jews for them. But the available facts of Soviet life decisively refute this claim. In 1959, almost half a million Jews recorded Yiddish as their first language. Every time a Yiddish book appears its supply is exhausted immediately upon publication and copies become unobtainable. Yiddish concerts—intermittent and inadequate though they are—because they are the single cultural medium still available to Jews, invariably attract overflow audiences. The festival of Simchath Torah each year finds Jews crowding the streets as the simplest form of affirmation of this Jewish identity.

In any case, there is no need to rely on conjecture, or even on the contradictory anecdotal accounts of travelers in the Soviet Union. (Reports of Jews with shadowed eyes who implore, "Do not forget us" are offset by other reports of somebody else's cousins who say, "We're fine the way we are.") No one desires that Soviet Jews be coerced into a feeling of fellowship or identity that is not authentic. We therefore propose a simple test: We challenge Soviet authorities to let there be established in the Soviet

(*Continued on page 181*)

EDITORIALS

A Better Purpose

In exactly 915 words, Archibald MacLeish has managed to sum up twenty years of cold-war history (*The New York Times*, January 21). "Like a badly constructed concert hall," he writes, history has occasional "dead spots where the music can't be heard." We are caught in one of them today, as shown by the confusion and lack of clear purpose in our national life, the frustration, the boredom, the stalemated reforms, the backbiting, the eclipse of social idealism. And the reason is clear. "We can't make out the tune of the time because we are still back behind it in the 1950s with the dilapidated bulk of 'Anti-Communism' against our faces." Like all the "anti-isms," "anti-communism" is not a policy but an expedient to conceal the fact that we have no policy. An "anti" policy does not define a goal or point a direction; it merely insures an automatic response to whatever initiatives the opposition undertakes. Containment—an attempt to formalize an "anti-Communist" position—has meant a "redefinition of the American purpose in the world as the negation of the Russian purpose"—or, more recently, the Chinese purpose or the Cuban purpose, or any revolutionary purpose. "If we could bring ourselves to look around, it might occur to us that we are not, whatever the ushers may have told us, in the best seat in the house. Some, of course, have already noticed. Even fifteen years ago when the place was first proposed to us a few protested. 'Anti-Communism,' which meant McCarthy at home and Containment abroad, looked like a queer location for the United States, a nation not previously given to squatting in the lee of anything."

But can we now bring ourselves to take that "look around" or would it be too painful? Are we willing to abandon the pursuit of affluence long enough to take such a look at ourselves and our position in the world? Mr. MacLeish hopefully notes that "the perspective alters" and indeed it does. But "anti-communism" is still the prime determinant of American policy, or lack of it. Dean Rusk's demonstrated inability to define American purpose in Vietnam in other than "anti-Communist" clichés is a measure of our continued entrapment by the compulsive ideology that masquerades as "anti-communism." Senator Fulbright complains that Mr. Rusk won't admit that Vietnam is a civil war; but how could he make such an admission? How then would he justify our presence there? Similarly the circumstance that a policeman—Mr. Hoover—is permitted a right of veto over even such a minor modification of our rigid "anti-Communist" position as the proposed consular treaty with the Russians is another measure of the extent to which we are prisoners of an ideology we neither acknowledge nor discuss. Since our adherence to this ideology, we have steadily lost the freedom of action which we possessed in 1945.

But Mr. MacLeish is right: the perspective alters. Under

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the impact of new realities, the hypnotic effect of "anti-communism" has begun to abate. An indication that the winds are shifting slightly is to be found in an article by Max Geltman, "The Decline of the Anti-Communist Left" in a recent issue of *National Review*. Mr. Geltman is keenly distressed that the shrill voices of the "anti-Communist Left"—really the cold-war liberals—have turned strangely silent. A group of American intellectuals who, fifteen years ago, helped to establish the moral and political climate for McCarthyism have now adopted a modified posture. Examples abound—you have only to scan the signatures on the petitions and published statements calling for an end to the war in Vietnam.

There are other indications. For example, the current issue of *Partisan Review* contains an interesting symposium on "What's Happening to America," from which one learns: "There is a good deal of anxiety about the direction of American life. In fact there is reason to fear that America may be entering a moral and political crisis." Quite true—and the crisis has been maturing for fifteen years. Today we are told that Vietnam is a "bitter heritage"; so it is, the heritage of two decades of intensive "anti-Communist" activity at home and abroad.

The perspective alters, but our policy makers are still prisoners of the ideology in which they have imprisoned themselves. The "anti-Communist Left" may be less venomous than it was and, now and then, some of the scaffolding of McCarthyism is dismantled. The Supreme Court's recent decision invalidating New York's teacher loyalty program is a case in point. But as Mr. MacLeish notes: "McCarthy has disappeared—but only to be replaced by the apparently ineradicable rock of McCarthyism. And Containment has turned into the disaster implicit in it from the start—the disaster of Vietnam." Nor is the end in sight: in the intervening period the power of the Right has steadily grown as the power of the Left has steadily declined. As a result of this change in the relative power of the two wings, the Center position has swung much further to the right. A well-organized and heavily financed element now exists well to the right of Goldwater. On today's spectrum, the late Sen. Robert Taft would appear as left of Center.

Fifteen years ago a few political observers were willing to protest that "anti-communism" could never define an American purpose. Today there are more, but still not enough. At some pain and discomfort, *The Nation* insisted then—and has continued to insist—that the only answer to communism is, as Mr. MacLeish puts it, "a better purpose of our own." And the pity of it is that with all the frights and alarms, crises and debacles of the last twenty years, we have always *had* a better purpose at hand. The Revolution of 1776, not the Revolution of 1917, is, as Mr. MacLeish points out, today providing "the dynamics of the waking world from the west coast of Africa to the islands of Japan." Perhaps, by some miracle, we may yet recapture the spirit of that revolution.

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The Nation is published weekly (except biweekly in July and August) by the Nation Magazine Company and copyright 1967 in the U.S.A. by the Nation Associates, Inc., 333 Sixth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10014. Tel.: CH 2-8400. Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing office.

Subscription Price: One year, $10; two years, $18. Foreign and Canadian postage: $1 extra per year.

Change of Address: It is essential that subscribers ordering a change of address give four weeks' notice and provide their old as well as their new address. Please give Zip Code numbers for both addresses.

Information to Libraries: **The Nation** is indexed in Readers Guide to Periodical Literature, Book Review Digest, Book Review Index and the Public Affairs Information Service.

THE NATION *Volume 204 No. 6*

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The Big-Guns Budget

Mr. Johnson's budget is a multiple effort such as one would expect from a politician seasoned in dispensing rewards and foreseeing the effects of what he gives and what he withholds. It contains potential goodies for each Congressman: opposition cannot be disarmed, but it can be minimized. The aged and other deprived groups are given special treatment, special commiseration, special promises. The space boys receive about the same funds as in the earlier stages of Apollo, which at the present stage of the moon race is more than enough. A show of moderation is based on cutbacks of atomic missiles. The Johnson flank is protected by a start on an anti-missile defense, and so on.

The submittal of the Presidential budget is of course a ritualistic exercise. Its underlying aims are political, despite its economic façade. The President can only make recommendations. He does not spend the money (nor adjust the taxes); all that is up to Congress. When the President submits the budget, he lays down the preliminary outlines for debate. For the moment he is on the spot, while Congressmen wring their hands at his extravagance and his wild ideas, and others dutifully praise him for his loving solicitude toward the common man. The same Congressmen who are now calling him names will soon be voting for pork-barrel projects for their own districts, and logrolling with their colleagues. When it comes to "defense," they will be appropriating funds that the Administration has not asked for and will not spend.

"Defense," current spending for war, preparation for future wars—these are the solid parts of the budget. These are the parts that Congress will not cut. The knife will be out for everything that contributes to peace and welfare —the two sides of the same coin. The economizers will zero in on all these items and pare them just short of the point where public outrage might be aroused. If they stop short of making a shambles of the Great Society, it will not be from statesmanship or good will but from prudence. To batter LBJ too hard would not be safe, but they will know how far to go.

This is not a guns-and-butter or even a guns-and-margarine budget. The guns will remain and the margarine ration will be lowered. With $73 billion for defense, including $22 billion for the Vietnamese War, the hawks will still not be satisfied. The gentlemen of the Air Force Association, representing some of the big arms contractors, listened the other day at New York's Twenty-One restaurant to Barry Goldwater calling for more war and more military spending. The Army and Navy contractors will be equally importunate.

Nor should it be forgotten that the budget is based on the premise that the defense of civilization in Southeast Asia will continue at the present level. "The national defense program for the current and coming fiscal year," Mr. Johnson intoned, "bears the deep imprint of our commitment to preserve the independence of South Vietnam and to bring peace to that nation." He added that this part of the budget would be for the entire year, "*barring unforeseen developments in Vietnam or elsewhere in the world. . . .*" He also said: "In Vietnam, *as throughout the world*, we seek peace, but will provide all the resources needed to combat aggression." (Italics added in both cases.) With such a blanket commitment, unforeseen developments can be foreseen.

In short, this is a war budget by a war President, and not much else.

The Perils of Overexposure

It would not be fair to say that the Kennedys seek publicity. They don't need to. Their present plight, however, is a horrible example of what overexposure can do to the image of a once popular group. Actually the application is only to Jacqueline Kennedy and Sen. Robert Kennedy. The old people no longer count except within the family, and Sen. Edward Kennedy has been on the sidelines of the current squabble.

The Manchester-Kennedy controversy reflects no credit on anyone involved. The latest episode, in which Manchester, before high tailing it to a jolly retreat in the Caribbean, fired a gratuitous parting salvo at Mrs. Kennedy, at the unhappy Bobby, at Richard Goodwin and others, only added to the unpleasant effect of the earlier proceedings. His two principal targets have temporarily been driven from the country. Bobby is leaving for London and Paris; Mrs. Kennedy, after her own trip to Southern waters, plans to visit Asia.

The commissioning of an authorized account of the terrible events of 1963 was a mistake to begin with. Mrs. Kennedy's pouring out her heart on tape to Mr. Manchester was a second mistake. Apparently, she has never heard Somerset Maugham's aphorism: "You can't be a writer and a gentleman too." If Maugham, who was a gentleman and at times a distinguished writer, couldn't manage it, how could Manchester?

The subsequent attempts on the part of the Kennedys to control the text of the book and its serialization gave the impression of an arrogant use of money and power. They may have been within their legal rights, but that is not the point. Apparently most of what they objected to was of little moment one way or the other. The public was not in a mood to go along with them, whether they were right or wrong. The John F. Kennedy aura was blown away by the exchange of recriminations.

At a given point of idolatry the public turns from adoring its idols and begins to examine their feet. Once celebrities reach a certain level of overexposure, there is just as much mileage to be gained from cutting them down as there was from building them up. The writers and broadcasters who provide this sort of fare are familiar with the reaction, and when some of them sense the turning point, the others follow. All of the overexposed live

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in the shadow of an obloquy. It is one of the hazards of publicity.

When the assault begins, no holds are barred. A British journalist now accuses the Kennedys of trying to establish a power base at Harvard through the John F. Kennedy School of Government. This is scurrilous nonsense. Harvard was there before the Kennedys, before the U.S. Government; it is well able to protect itself against wealth and power, from whatever source. Yet now, because of some mistakes in taste and judgment by a prominent family, not only is the family the butt of any scribbler, but a Harvard dean, and even the president of the university, must speak in its defense. Really, it's too much.

Winter of Discontent

Brandt, es ist aus. . . . Thus begins a sharp and bitter little poem addressed to the head of Germany's Democrats by F.C. Delius, a poet of the younger Berlin set. He belongs to the group of writers who supported Brandt—both in federal politics and against the power wielders in the apparatus of his own party; now, this group feels, Brandt has betrayed them: *Brandt, it is over. . . .*

It is an open question, however, when this betrayal took place, and whether it was not partly self-betrayal. The Berlin climate of the last few years was kind—suspiciously kind—to a politicking intelligentsia; Brandt, Arndt, Professor Schiller mingled freely with Günter Grass, Hans Werner Richter, Uwe Johnson and the younger set mentioned above. It looked as if, for the first time, the old curse of German authoritarianism, which relegates writers and thinkers to the sidelines of society, could be attacked successfully. And the bitterness resulting from the new SPD "sellout," the Grand Coalition, was correspondingly great.

But was it really a sellout? The Grand Coalition was certainly an attempt to forestall the worst: a general and widespread distrust of the "system," in other words, of democracy. Can it succeed? Cartoonists spoofed the coalition as a society wedding—Kiesinger as the groom and Willy Brandt as the bride; they may not be far off the truth. The coalition is, fundamentally, a nonpolitical way out; it tries to replace the old father figure (Adenauer) by the image of a "happy family." It tries to reconcile democracy to the German petty-bourgeois mind which still abhors "bickering," "sterile antagonism" and the like—in other words, abhors the fundamental principle of democracy: institutionalized conflict.

Herbert Wehner, the powerful SPD boss, contends that his party has to be made respectable by participation in government before it becomes truly acceptable to the floating vote. He also asserts that the coalition should be a passing phenomenon; that it should pave the way to a true Anglo-Saxon democratic system by adopting, for future elections, the two-party setup and the abolition of splinter representation in Parliament.

But does the German mind understand what a two-party system must be? Does it realize that both parties must become "democracies"—establishing within their own realms some sort of majority-minority consent before they become viable as political alternatives? There lies the new and very necessary field of action for the German intelligentsia.

But to occupy that field, the progressive spirit in Germany must overcome its old handicaps: perfectionism in political demands, dogmatism in principle, feebleness in action. The political climate in West Germany has moved to the right; not as much as international publicity has made out by trumpeting NPD successes but perceptibly enough to cause real worry. The nation cannot afford any longer to ignore its intellectuals—and the intellectuals cannot afford any more to stay aloof. C. AMERY

Up to Our Necks in Thailand

The early history of our involvement in Vietnam could be rewritten as current history in Thailand. Only one qualification is necessary: in Thailand new heights of deceit, double talk, obfuscation and plain lying have been reached. As in Vietnam, we are sending in troops (preponderantly airmen for the present), building bases, "advising" the Thai military, financing the ruling class lavishly, introducing the GI culture—including admiration for local womanhood—and making this sizable country (it is about as large as France) the fifty-first state, as Senator Fulbright has called it.

There are also a few differences from the story of Vietnam. One is that we did not need to put in our own boy to rule the country; no Ngo Dinh Diem was necessary. When we came on the scene the Thais already had a royal house of ancient lineage and a military dictatorship headed by Field Marshal Sarit Thanarat, who amassed a personal fortune of $140 million in five years, largely from our bounty. Sarit died, leaving not only this goodly estate but wives and concubines to a number remarkable even for Thailand.

As everyone knows by now (though no loyal Thai or loyal American will publicly admit it), since 1965 the major part of our air attacks on North Vietnam have originated at Thai bases. Eleven U.S. fighter-bomber squadrons are now stationed there. Although it is no longer denied that these forces have wrought considerable havoc, both military and civilian, in North Vietnam, their operations are relatively small stuff, as are the air operations over Laos. A modern fighter-bomber may be the peer in payload of a World War II heavy bomber, but it is rated as a tactical weapon.

The Strategic Air Command naturally wanted to exercise its muscles in Southeast Asia, and has been doing so since 1965 with B-52 raids on South Vietnam and the demilitarized zone between the two Vietnams. But these giants had to fly from Guam, nearly a 5,000-mile round

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trip, and some of them will now be more conveniently based at our airfields in Thailand. In fact, a number of B-52s are already there and have engaged in operations, although this is stoutly denied by the Air Force.

Since the United States can admit to being in Thailand for only one purpose—the defense of Western civilization against communism—we needed there the equivalent of the Vietcong in South Vietnam, and an insurrectionary force was duly detected in the northeast section of the country, adjacent to Laos. As earlier in Vietnam, the State Department denied that we were fighting the restive peasants; all we were doing was supplying helicopters to ferry Thai troops into action.

By U.S. accounts, Thailand is the most fiercely independent nation in the world, a kind of Switzerland of Asia. It has never been a colony and will never bend the knee to a great power. It is because of this almost neurotic sensitivity that we are forced to deny that we have 40,000 men in the country and that the bases are ours. It is a question whether this immemorial attitude of Thailand-for-the-Thais will long endure. It may be that the Thais will gradually be colonized, American style; they have only to look to the southeast to see how it comes about. But what matter? The top Thais are getting well paid for the services we render them.

Reagan's Lesson

The firing of Clark Kerr by the University of California Regents is the latest and most extreme example of the irresponsibility that has come, in just two weeks, to characterize the Reagan administration.

The *San Francisco Chronicle* of Saturday, January 21, carried the headline:

UC Regents Fire Kerr
—Big Victory for Reagan

And so it was—in his battle to hamstring the university and destroy the state's tradition of free education for all. It has often been said that the University of California demonstrates that it is possible to have *both* class and mass, for it is certainly the most distinguished state university in the country and one of America's greatest educational institutions. (See article by Mel Wax, p. 178.)

Reagan has advocated charging tuition, and many think that Kerr's strenuous opposition to this policy was one of the main reasons for his abrupt dismissal. But it has also been known that Reagan was out "to get Kerr," on the matter of handling the students during the recent strikes. Kerr is "soft on students," which is close enough to being "soft on communism" to warrant the guillotine in Orange County.

In addition to sacking Kerr and advocating tuition, Reagan has also requested large budget cuts, for both the university and the state-college system. Quite probably he is maneuvering: he will reduce the size of the cuts he is requesting (and perhaps even the tuition he advocates) and thus will emerge as a "moderate."

Regardless of what happens in the future, the immediate result of all this is that neither the university nor the state colleges can attract new faculty members, since the salaries are no longer competitive and the political climate is no longer so "sunny." This has long been a problem, especially in the state-college system, where faculty members carry heavy loads for only mediocre salaries. As a result, only about 50 per cent of its teaching staff have doctorates. Last year the system had half a dozen openings for *presidencies*—and had to go begging to fill them.

Thus, the educational system in California, in the control of such luminaries as Max Rafferty and Ronald Reagan, is plunging into a smog of despair. And "who shall lead it out?"

RHODESIA: SANCTIONS ON TRIAL

JOHN HATCH
Mr. Hatch is Commonwealth correspondent for the New Statesman *and director of the Inter-University African Studies Program, University of Houston. He is the author of* Africa Today—and Tomorrow.

London

On the evening of December 5, 1966, we waited outside the cabinet office in Salisbury, Rhodesia, a crowd of some 1,000, to learn whether Ian Smith and his cabinet had clinched the deal with Harold Wilson or were to fight on against the world. It was a hot, tropical night—during the day the temperature had risen to nearly 100°F. We had been there since morning, for the deadline agreed upon with the British was now eight hours past. A few black faces mingled with the white, but Africans kept mostly to the fringes. Despite the importance of the decision, there was an unreal, amateur air about the scene. We could even see Ian Smith's back through the open window as he sat at the head of the cabinet table. Occasionally, as the long hours ticked away, he would turn to the window and wave to us. For some minutes he was on his feet, clearly reading a document to his colleagues.

It was 8 P.M. when the double doors on the ground level swung open. To a shout of "Good old Smithy," the Rhodesian Prime Minister led his cabinet out into the forecourt beneath arc lights, flash bulbs and television cameras. He stood in the center of a semicircle formed by his colleagues to read the statement responding to the document produced two days earlier with Mr. Wilson aboard the British naval ship, *Tiger*. His first two sen-

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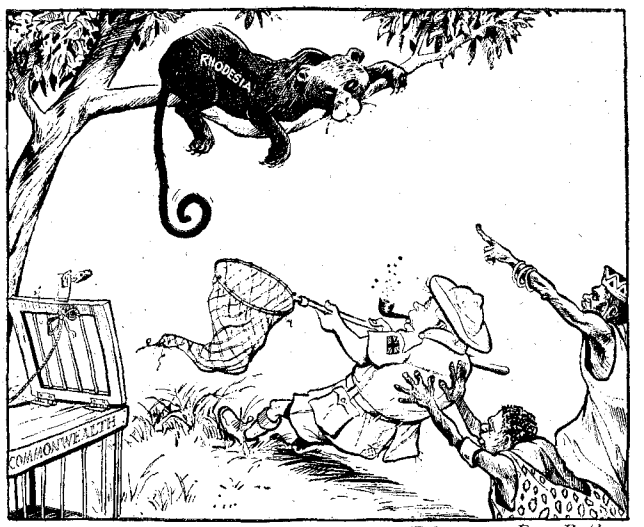
tences indicated agreement. A murmur through the crowd suggested that they believed the quarrel with Britain to be at an end. But his next word was "however. . . ." Then we knew that it was to be rejection. For Mr. Wilson had made it very plain that there was no longer room for reservation or amendment. Indeed, the rest of the statement represented a total rejection of the method laid down by Britain for the Smith regime to return to legality. It concluded with a ringing cry, "The fight goes on." At that, one man in the crowd called for three cheers for John Vorster, South Africa's Prime Minister; another



Beaton, Toronto Telegram; Ben Roth

shouted "out with the moderates"; and members of the cabinet grinned self-consciously.

This was the climax to one of the most astonishing episodes in British colonial history. To explain the significance of the drama we need to recall the events leading to this tableau outside the cabinet office in Salisbury.

Rhodesia is legally a British colony. However, it differs from all other colonies in that it has never actually been ruled by a British Government. It was colonized toward the end of the last century by Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company. Agents of the company made agreements with the chiefs of African tribes, in particular with Lobengula, King of the Matabele, to prospect for minerals. When the Africans found that white men were also beginning to take their land, they objected and several wars took place. The African tribes, mainly the two groups known as the Matabele and the Mashona, were conquered. The BSAC then ruled the country until 1923 when its charter, granted by Queen Victoria, was due to expire.

In that year the British Government stepped in. It allowed the 35,000 Europeans to vote in a referendum on the alternative of becoming a self-governing colony or joining South Africa. In the proportion of about 4 to 3, the white settlers chose self-government. They were allowed their own parliament, civil service, police force and armed forces. Only external affairs and a veto on discriminatory legislation remained in the hands of the British Parliament.

This remained the position until 1953. By that time the European population, swollen by many refugees from postwar Britain's austerity, had grown to nearly 150,000. In 1953, Southern Rhodesia was joined with Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia in the Central African Federation. Injected with the rich copper profits of its northern neighbor, the economy boomed again. Immigrants from Britain and South Africa flocked into Salisbury and Bulawayo, where manufactures and service industries rapidly augmented the tobacco farming and mineral mining which had formed the country's staples.

But the federation failed. Despite the fact that it was ostensibly based on "racial partnership," the Africans soon found that this principle had been aptly described by the first federal Prime Minister, Godfrey Huggins, as the partnership of horse and rider. In Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia African political parties grew strong enough to break down the federal structure and establish their own independent, African-governed states, which in 1964 became Malawi and Zambia.

This left Southern Rhodesia (now known as Rhodesia) on its own. It had about 225,000 European inhabitants and 4 million Africans. But before, during and after federation it had been governed by the white community. Indeed, despite the radical changes which had taken place all over Africa during the 1950s, no African was allowed to sit in the Rhodesian parliament until the end of 1962. Even then, only fifteen out of the sixty-five seats were filled by Africans, and they were elected by only a tiny section of the African population. This was partly because of the limited franchise, partly because African nationalists boycotted the constitution in protest against its undemocratic character.

With the grant of independence to Malawi and Zambia in 1964, Britain was left in an embarrassing position regarding Rhodesia. Inevitably, seeing their two neighbors becoming independent states, Rhodesian whites demanded complete independence themselves. They pointed out that the African ministers of the two new states had virtually no experience of administration; while they, themselves, had governed their country for the past forty years.

Yet throughout the decolonization period from 1947 on, British Parliaments had always adopted the principle that independence would be granted only after the whole population of a colony had expressed its desire to end colonial status. This had invariably been achieved through an election held on the basis of universal adult suffrage. But the Rhodesian franchise had always been heavily qualified in favor of the white man. Only a handful of Africans had ever been able to attain the financial and educational standards demanded for the right to vote. It was a small white oligarchy that demanded independence from British rule. The Africans, so far as they were able to express their wishes, urged that Britain retain its ultimate authority until the majority—obviously African—had gained the power to rule. This was what Britain had done in all its other dependencies, but in Rhodesia it had neither soldiers nor police nor civil service to insure that its wishes be carried out. Moreover, 225,000 Europeans were living in Rhodesia, compared with only

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about 70,000 in Zambia or 50,000 in Kenya, the other two principal multi-racial colonies. And many people in England regarded these Rhodesian whites as their "kith and kin."

This was the situation during the last year of Britain's Conservative government under Sir Alec Douglas-Home; it remained the position when Harold Wilson took over in October, 1964—with a majority of three!

Both Conservative and Labour governments refused the demands for complete independence. Each government insisted that before it would grant independence certain conditions must be fulfilled. The way must be clear for progress toward eventual majority rule, with safeguards to insure that there should be no turning back after Britain had surrendered sovereignty—as occurred in similar circumstances in South Africa. There must also be some immediate advance in African political status, abolition of racial discrimination, and the new constitution must be acceptable to the country as a whole. And, since the British Parliament alone could grant legal independence to Rhodesia, the British Government's policy represented the terms which any Rhodesian regime would have to fulfill in order to obtain constitutional sovereignty. In the event, the Smith regime decided that it would not accept such terms, but would take unconstitutional action. On November 11, 1965, Ian Smith declared Rhodesia independent, in defiance of British authority. The Wilson government immediately termed the declaration an act of treason, the Smith regime illegal. It called on all other states to refuse to recognize the regime, and no state has recognized the illegal government during the ensuing fourteen months.

It might have been expected that the other African states, hostile toward the white supremacy administrations of southern Africa, would have eagerly joined Britain in action against Smith and his colleagues. But two issues divided black Africa from Harold Wilson. In the summer of 1965, Julius Nyerere of Tanzania had quarreled with Wilson at the Commonwealth conference because the British Prime Minister refused to give an undertaking that he would not grant Rhodesia independence before majority rule had been established there. By the time Smith had declared unilateral independence in November it seemed to most Africans that nothing short of British military intervention could prevent white domination. Yet Wilson, with his meager majority of three, feared unpopularity with the British electorate and openly disclaimed any intention of using force. The Africans read these two lessons as proof that Wilson's government intended to make a deal with Smith's insubordinate regime, being unwilling to use the methods Britain had employed in the past against Africans and other non-whites in rebellious colonies.

So Tanzania and some other African states broke off diplomatic relations with Britain at the end of 1965. The key African position was held by Zambia. This northern neighbor of Rhodesia was heavily dependent on the rebellious colony for coal supplies to its vital copper industry, for the railway line which carried most of the copper exports, and for provision of most of its imports. President Kaunda of Zambia was prepared to cut off some trade to help the British sanctions policy against Smith, but was not willing to sacrifice his infant country's economy permanently on the altar of a policy he did not believe could succeed. The past year's experience has left Kaunda very angry with Harold Wilson. When, even after Wilson's majority was increased to ninety-seven in last March's elections, the British Prime Minister began to conduct talks with the Smith regime, Zambian suspicions of British intentions were confirmed. When I met President Kaunda over breakfast one steamy December morning, he made it plain that he and his colleagues were in the process of developing their potentially rich economy independently of British desires. In particular, they are turning their communications as fast as possible from the south to Tanzania and the Congo in the north. But, in the meantime, they look first to Zambian interests, even to the point of accepting South African supplies as substitutes for Rhodesian.

The Zambians are enthusiastically confident about their economic prospects; but I found Kaunda deeply worried lest the conflict with Rhodesia should disturb the racial peace which he is painstakingly building. Already some of the 70,000 Europeans in Zambia have shown overt or covert support for the Smith regime. Some Africans in Kaunda's party have retaliated. Riots have taken place on the Copper Belt; during one of them a European woman was killed, though accidentally, when a stone was thrown through her wind-screen. But Kaunda cannot afford to lose his skilled white workers, and he rightly feels apprehensive that confidence is ebbing as the ripples of the Rhodesian conflict spread to the north.

It was in this context that the meeting took place on H.M.S. *Tiger* at the beginning of December. Inevitably, it roused African suspicions to explosive levels. Again it confirmed the belief that Wilson was more concerned to reach any kind of settlement with Smith than to replace white supremacy by democratic rule. Nor were these suspicions confined to Africans. Several members of Wilson's government and more backbenchers were ready to resign in protest against the deal. When the document produced in this bizarre conference at sea was published, it was seen that Wilson had been prepared to sacrifice any appearance of democracy in the constitution he offered to Smith. Its acceptance would certainly have led to a furor in the Labour Party and have severed relations between Britain and Africa for many years.

As it turned out, Wilson was spared resignations and diplomatic ostracism by Smith's rejection of the document he had participated in drafting. Frankly, when those of us who have been concerned over the years to prevent Rhodesia's following the South African pattern heard Ian Smith pronounce the words "the fight goes on," we breathed a sigh of relief. For we recognized that now, unless there was further backsliding, Britain would be forced to follow the policy spelled out at last September's Commonwealth conference. This included asking the UN Security Council to declare mandatory sanctions on specified Rhodesian imports and exports, and a declaration that now Britain would withdraw all previous offers to Smith, refusing to grant independence before ma-

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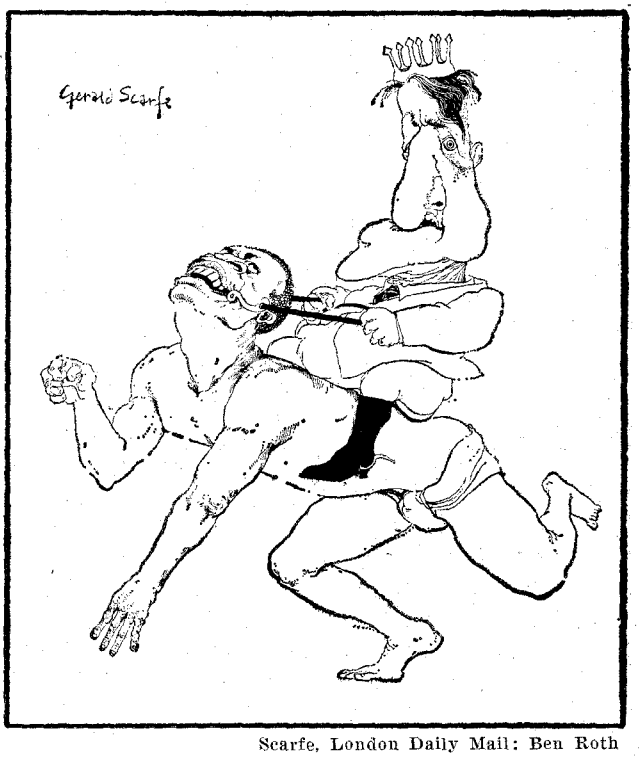
jority rule had been established. And this latter pledge, known as NIBMAR (no independence before majority African rule), I knew to be crucial to future British-African relations. Only a week before, Julius Nyerere had told me in Dar es Salaam that this pledge, and evidence that it was to be carried out, would restore his trust in Britain.

Why, then, if the *Tiger* offer appeared so favorable to the Rhodesian whites, did Smith and his cabinet reject the settlement? The answer is that they did not believe they could secure the constitution they were offered. The document was in two parts. The second, outlining a constitution under which Wilson would grant independence, was eminently acceptable to Smith. Indeed, he said at his TV press conference that if it had been offered last year he would not have declared UDI. But, according to the first part of the offer, to reach the constitutional settlement Smith would have to resign his independence and agree to four months' interim rule under the governor. Moreover, during this period a commission would have tested public opinion on the new constitution. Smith and his colleagues reckoned that public opinion—which would include the 4 million Africans as well as the 225,000 whites—would reject the constitution. It may be that Wilson thought the Rhodesian public would prefer the new constitution to Smith's present rule; or he may have estimated that the commission, on which Rhodesians would sit, would have been of such a character as to recommend acceptance. But Smith and his ministers were not prepared to take the chance. They feared that once they had surrendered independence the Rhodesian public would reject any constitution which restored it to them. They therefore were prepared for public opinion to be tested on the draft constitution only *before* they handed over power to the governor. They believed that in these circumstances, when the choice would appear to be between continued white autocratic rule or the new constitution, there would be a chance of public acceptance of the settlement. If not, they would still hold the reins of power. Whatever Ian Smith's own views on the *Tiger*—and he is a weak, indeterminate man who likes to agree with whoever he is talking to at the moment—as soon as his cabinet saw the document it was unanimously rejected.

But the *Tiger* incident has created a new situation. After the first brash cries of defiance, opinion among many whites began to waver. The business community, always opposed to UDI, although making it work, was strongly apprehensive of UN sanctions. The farmers—both tobacco and mixed—are in a bad way. Last year's tobacco crop paid them 23 pence a pound compared with 35 pence the year before. And, for the first time, the white community had believed when Smith went to the *Tiger* that a settlement might ensue. When they asked themselves whether they preferred a settlement to a fight to the finish, most answered that they hoped that the quarrel with Britain could be ended—though not by handing over government to Africans.

Since the rejection of the *Tiger* document, Wilson has moved forward along the lines laid down by the Commonwealth conference. The Security Council has approved sanctions on selected Rhodesian trade, though disappointing the Africans by not mentioning the use of force or confrontation with South Africa and Portugal if they refuse to apply sanctions. On December 20, after a painful delay, Wilson also announced that independence would not now be offered to the Rhodesians before majority rule had been introduced. Immediately, President Nyerere declared that his country's quarrel with Britain was over.

What happens now? A great deal depends on how seriously Britain and America apply the sanctions. If sales of tobacco, chrome, asbestos, pig iron and meat are denied to Rhodesians, they will find it difficult to gain foreign currency to buy essential imports. And South



Scarfe, London Daily Mail: Ben Roth

Africa will find it increasingly expensive to support the Smith regime.

But oil is the vital issue. So long as the South Africans continue to supply Rhodesia with oil, the economy can be kept going, though on a lower plateau. Africans will judge the sincerity of Britain and America in replacing a white oligarchic regime with eventual democracy by their policy on oil. If they command their oil companies—and their South African subsidiaries—to stop the supply of oil; and if they warn South Africa and Portugal that they do not intend the UN will to be flouted, then the Smith regime can be defeated. Already, the Nationalist Cape Town daily, *Die Burger,* has told Smith to drop UDI. This will then be seen as a victory for the West's determination to secure democratic, nonracial societies. If there is any fudging of the issue, any appeasement of South Africa, any further negotiations with Smith, then the West will be damned as hypocritical and racist. It is not, then, just the future of Rhodesia or even of southern Africa which is at stake here; the reputation of the whole Western society is on trial for proof of its sincerity toward racial equality.

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Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal

HOWARD ZINN

Mr. Zinn, a frequent Nation *contributor, teaches courses in political theory and civil liberties at Boston University. This article will appear as a chapter in his forthcoming book on Vietnam, to be published by Beacon Press in March.*

Senator Hickenlooper of Iowa was questioning George Kennan at the Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearings in early 1966:

> HICKENLOOPER: Now, there are problems facing us and others. . . . How we disengage ourselves without losing a tremendous amount of face or position in various areas of the world.
>
> KENNAN: Senator, I think precisely the question, the consideration that you have just raised, is the central one that we have to think about; and it seems to me, as I have said here, that a precipitate, sudden and unilateral withdrawal would not be warranted by circumstances now.

A bit later in the questioning:

> HICKENLOOPER: Do you think the rather immediate withdrawal of the United States forces and our activity in South Vietnam from that country could be used effectively as a propaganda tool and weapon in Africa and in the emerging nations of Africa?
>
> KENNAN: Senator, it would be a six months' sensation, but I dare say we would survive it in the end, and there would be another day. Things happen awfully fast on the international scene, and people's memories are very short. . . .

Kennan's testimony on the matter of withdrawal is important because it is representative of a large body of influential opinion which says flatly we must not withdraw, but then cannot really give persuasive reasons why we should not. Prestige, Kennan says, is the "central question" if we withdraw, but then he adds that it would be a "six months' sensation" and "we would survive it in the end."

In *Triumph or Tragedy,* Richard Goodwin argues that withdrawal "would damage the confidence of all Asian nations, and of many other nations, in the willingness and the ability of the United States to protect them against attack." But it seems that most Asians and "many other nations" disagree completely with Goodwin; they would like us to leave Vietnam. And one can readily see why: we are "protecting" Vietnam by killing its people and destroying its land. Who else would want such protection?

Toward the end of his book, Goodwin makes an odd statement. He says: "In the South we have no choice but to continue the war. We are under attack and withdrawal is impossible and unwise." Are we not "under attack" because we are *there,* and is it not true that if we withdrew we would no longer be under attack?

General Gavin, who preceded Kennan as a major witness before the Fulbright committee, had an exchange with Sen. Frank Church of Idaho:

> CHURCH: Now, if we had not intervened in the interim since . . . and if we had not made the pledges that have been made to the Saigon government, and committed American presence and prestige there; in other words, if you were again faced with the same question . . . would you still be of the same opinion that the vital security interests of the United States from a military standpoint do not require the deployment of American troops in Indo-China?
>
> GAVIN: Yes, sir. I would say so. "Vital" is the key word there.

It turns out that a remarkable number of high-placed officials agree that the United States should never have become involved in military intervention in Vietnam. But now that we have done so, they feel an important matter of "prestige" is involved. For instance, in a round-up of opinion in the Senate which *New York Times* reporter E. W. Kenworthy made in the summer of 1965, he found that "many of these silent Senators" told reporters off the record that they wished the United States "had never gone into Vietnam; they would like to get out, even at the cost of a political compromise amounting to defeat, but they will not advocate military withdrawal under fire."

We are dealing here with an odd logic: that it was wrong for the United States to get involved in the first place, because Vietnam is simply not "vital" for American security, but that we must not withdraw from a move that was both wrong and costly because now our "prestige" is involved. This must mean that the stake in prestige is enormously important. It was so important to Sen. Frank Church that when Gavin said he *still* felt no vital United States interests were at stake, Church immediately said:

> I wanted to get that on the record, General, because there has been so much discussion of withdrawal, and I do not know anyone around this table, certainly no member of the Foreign Relations Committee, that has advocated a withdrawal . . . under the present circumstances . . . in Vietnam. But . . . we have made a very great commitment of American prestige and a very solemn political commitment that has to be thrown into the balance. . . .

Not one member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee would advocate withdrawal, even those as critical of United States policy as Fulbright, Morse, Church, Gore and Clark. The "solemn political commitment" to General Ky could hardly be considered more solemn than the nation's commitment to the Geneva Accords, to the United Nations Charter, to the Constitution of the United States, all of which have been ignored by United States policy in Vietnam. What is left is "prestige," and it must be that even for the Senators criticizing the Administration this weighed so heavily in "the balance" Church spoke of that none would call for withdrawal. The factor of "prestige" would then have to outweigh all else that stemmed from the admitted original error of engagement in Vietnam: billions of dollars, thousands of lives, and also untold dollars, lives and dangers in the future.

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To balance all *that* the prestige factor would need to be of overwhelming significance. Let us see.

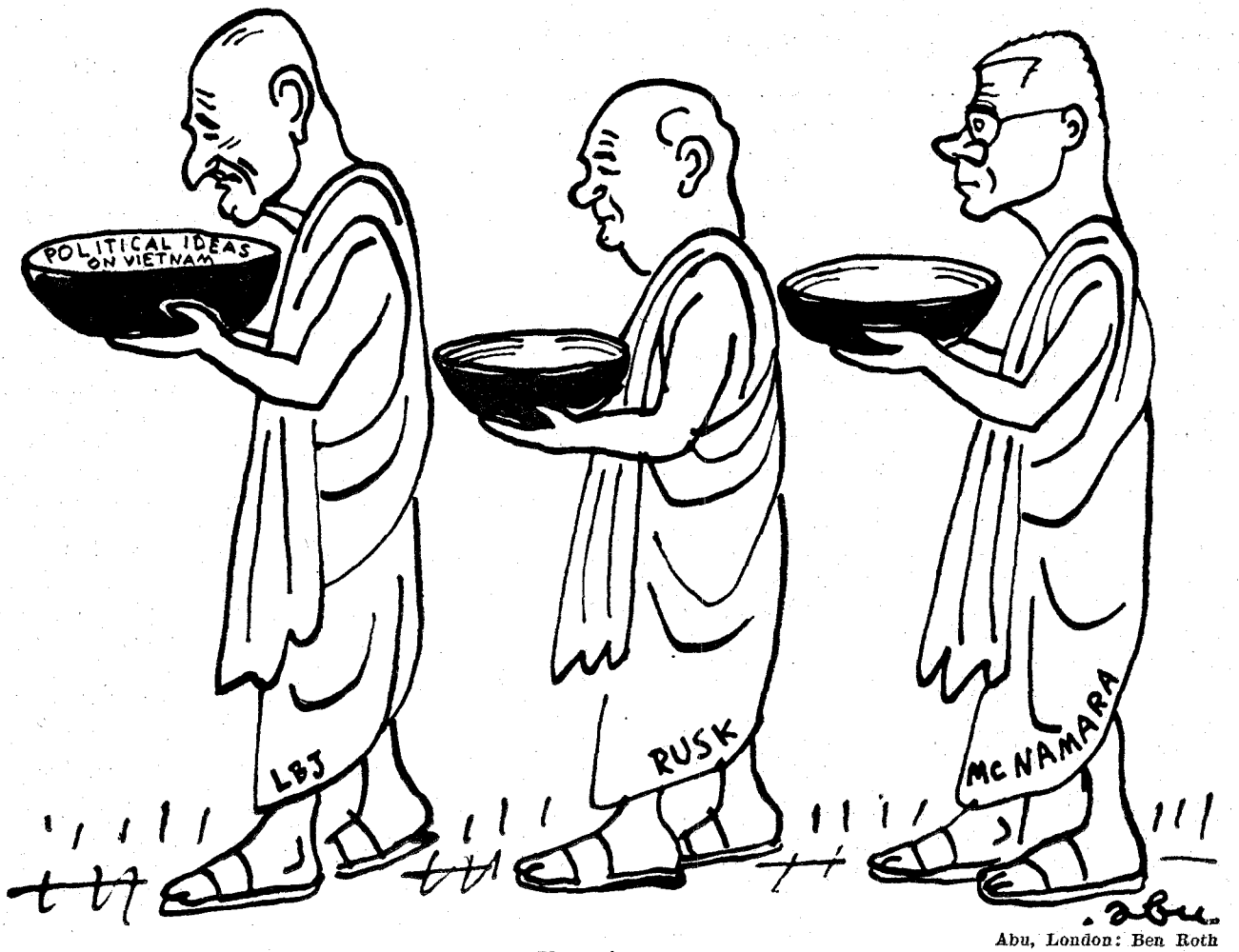
Kennan himself, in his testimony, talked about "the damage being done to the feelings entertained for us by the Japanese people" by the present policy, and said "the confidence and good disposition of the Japanese is the greatest asset we have had and the greatest asset we could have in East Asia." Does not the loss of United States prestige in Japan—"the greatest asset . . . in East Asia" —rank at least equal to the "six months' sensation" that Kennan said would be the cost of our withdrawal? And if to Japan we add Great Britain, France, indeed, most of Western Europe, as well as Africa and Latin America, where our prestige has suffered heavy reverses as a result of the Vietnamese policy, does it not seem likely that the result of withdrawal would be a net *gain* in prestige?

History does not show that a nation which liquidates a bad venture suffers a serious loss of prestige where it can compensate in other ways. Proud, powerful England surrendered to the ragtag thirteen American colonies, removed its armed forces ignominiously, and did not suffer for it. More recently, and more pertinently, France moved out voluntarily from Algeria and from Indo-China; today it has more prestige than ever before. The Soviet Union pulled its missiles out of Cuba; its prestige has not suffered, and many people who feared World War III was coming feel a certain gratitude for its prudence. Hans Morgenthau, who has spent a good part of his scholarly career analyzing international relations and who made his reputation as a hardheaded "realist," not as an "idealist," has written: "Is it really a boon to the prestige of the most powerful nation on earth to be bogged down in a war which it is neither able to win nor can afford to lose? This is the real issue which is presented by the argument of prestige."

So far I have been talking only about prestige as a flat, one-dimensional quantity. But more important is its *quality*. There is a kind of prestige this nation should not worry about losing—that which is attached to sheer power, to victory by force of arms, devoid of moral content. Which is more terrible: to have people in the world say that the United States withdrew from an untenable situation, or to have it said, as is now being said everywhere, that the United States is acting foolishly and immorally in Vietnam?

For George Kennan, there is no vital reason for the United States to stay in Vietnam, even knowing its withdrawal would probably lead to a Communist-dominated Vietnam, *except* for prestige. As he told the committee:

> If it were not for the considerations of prestige that arise precisely out of our present involvement, even a situation in which South Vietnam was controlled exclusively by the Vietcong, while regrettable and no



Abu, London: Ben Roth

Vow of poverty

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> doubt morally unwarranted, would not, in my opinion, present dangers great enough to justify our direct military intervention.

And if, upon examination, this "prestige" turns out to be empty (using Kennan's own example of Japan, plus what else we know), there is hardly anything left to support our "direct military intervention."

Then why, instead of simply urging immediate withdrawal, do Kennan, Gavin and Morgenthau advance the "enclave" theory: that United States forces should stop bombing and retire to a few strong positions on the coast? All of them, not believing that a United States presence in Vietnam is vital, are really suggesting this as a halfway step to withdrawal. The presumption is that holding on to enclaves would also hold on to a bit of prestige, and unlike "precipitate, sudden, unilateral" withdrawal, would give us time to negotiate our way out of Vietnam.

This proposal, however, comes too late in the history of the conflict in Vietnam. By now, the war against the Vietcong is mainly an American war; by September, 1966, United States forces were larger than the regular forces of the Ky government. With American bombings ended and troops withdrawn the Saigon government would collapse. Would it serve American "prestige" to stand by in enclaves while the Ky government fell apart to be replaced by a government which—whether Buddhist-neutralist or Vietcong—would ask or tell the United States to leave?

It would be far less ignominious for the United States to decide to leave on its own—before it is asked by a new government in South Vietnam. Speedy withdrawal need not be shameful; this is not a Dunkirk situation where decimated troops, harassed on ground and air, scramble into boats and flee. The United States controls the air, the ports, the sea; it can make the most graceful, the most majestic withdrawal in history. Of course it could not do this in a day or a week; it would need to pull its troops from the interior to the coast (so that *temporarily* there would be something like "enclaves"), and then transport them away from Vietnam as quickly as ships and planes could carry them.

The enclave proposal comes too late in another sense. The supposition is that United States troops could be concentrated in enclaves while negotiations proceeded, at the end of which they would come home. But what would be the point of this? At one time, it might have been argued that this would create the show of force on the spot which would enable the United States to negotiate from a position of some strength. But this implies there is something to negotiate *for*. If there once was, that time is past. Earlier in the war, the National Liberation Front might possibly have settled for some solution less than a dominant position in South Vietnam. For instance, right after Diem's assassination in November, 1963 (according to *The New York Times* and the *Manchester Guardian*, and cited in the American Friends Service Committee's *Peace in Vietnam*), Hanoi was willing to discuss a coalition, neutralist government in South Vietnam. But at that time Rusk turned down a French proposal for a neutral, independent South Vietnam, and the following July the United States rejected a suggestion by U Thant, accepted by France, the USSR, Peking and Hanoi, to reconvene the Geneva Conference. On July 24, 1964, responding to de Gaulle's plea to reconvene at Geneva, President Johnson told the press: "We do not believe in conferences called to ratify terror, so our policy is unchanged." (See Schurmann, et al., *The Politics of Escalation in Vietnam.*) By April, 1965, the negotiating position of Hanoi had become hardened into four points which included settling Vietnamese affairs "in accordance with the program of the National Liberation Front."

It is an old story in the history of rebellion. The American colonists would have been ready to accept some solution less than independence in early 1775, but by January, 1776, they were committed to no less than independence. Negroes in Montgomery, Ala., were ready at one point in the 1955 campaign on bus desegregation to accept merely a modified form of desegregation; but by the time their movement had crystallized, they would accept nothing less than total integration. Richard Goodwin points (in *Triumph or Tragedy*) to the increasing militancy of the other side, despite our ferocious bombing, and says:

> We cannot know the will of men we do not understand. From Thermopylae to the Japanese-infested islands of the Pacific and Hitler's Berlin bunker, history is full of individuals and fighting forces who chose to fight against impossible odds and accept certain death.

Goodwin points to the dilemma of negotiations *at this stage*: the Vietcong will not accept any settlement that does not give them "a role in the political life of the country"; and at the same time, "it is unlikely we will permit any government to come to power which would inflict on us what some would see as the 'humiliation' of requesting our withdrawal."

By now, the Vietcong (and their friends in the North) have sacrificed too much to settle for anything less than a South Vietnam in which the NLF plays the major role, and from which United States troops completely withdraw. And if this is the only possible successful outcome of negotiations with a determined revolutionary foe, what is the point of negotiating? It might be argued that such a settlement might be made in effect, but tied with enough pretty bows and frills to make it *look* as if the United States had gained something from it. The world will hardly be deceived; the deception will last a short time, and there will be a much longer time—no matter what we do—for other countries to contemplate the fact that the United States had, whatever the niceties, departed from Vietnam.

True, there are certain developments to be hoped for when the present government and its American military support are gone. But none of these—except one—depends on the presence of United States soldiers. That one positive thing which the United States can do, as it departs, is to take with it those government officials, army officers and others who fear for their lives when a new government comes in. These people could be resettled in any of a dozen places. Are we required to stay in Vietnam, as some have suggested, in order to "meet our

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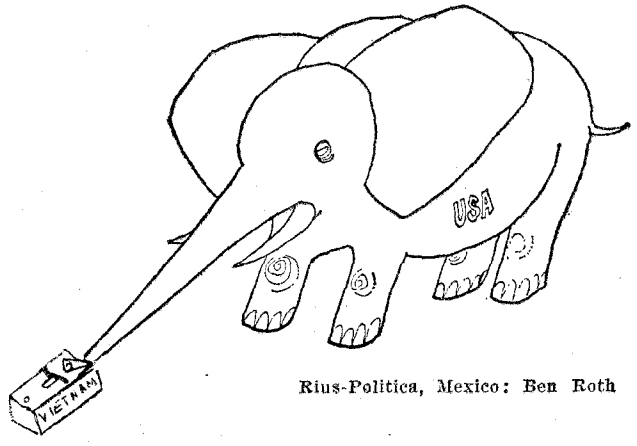
pledges" to the present officialdom, when this seems to require killing their fellow countrymen in large numbers? Surely our job is not to go around the world protecting semi-feudal dictatorships from the wrath of revolutionaries. It is a historical fact that revolutionaries, after victory, are merciless with those of the old regime. After World War II, Frenchmen executed—without benefit of trial—thousands of former Nazi collaborators. (We might note that the United States Government, which seems very concerned with what might happen to Vietnamese officials, was silent when 250,000 Indonesians, said to be Communists, were massacred.) With a bit of inconvenience, we can save many of those in Vietnam who are in danger.

The other desirable developments cannot be guaranteed, indeed can only be thwarted, by United States military presence. One of these is the establishment of a government in which not only the NLF but Buddhist, Montagnard and other elements play a role. This we will have to leave to the Buddhists and others to work for; they are quite militant and capable of pressing for their rights. The United States cannot negotiate, for any future component of government in South Vietnam, a strength which does not exist. If it does exist, then the Vietnamese must negotiate it for themselves. The presence of the United States can only distort the true balance of forces, and only a settlement which represents this balance can be stable.

What was fundamentally wrong with the Geneva Agreements was that the great powers dominated it and falsified the real relationship of forces. All the North and half the South were under Vietminh control, and the division of the country into two equal parts was bound to fail. Not only the United States but also the Soviet Union and the Republic of China were responsible for this development, because their own national ambitions required a peaceful settlement, even at the expense of the Vietminh. Neither communism nor capitalism, it seems, can be depended on to look out for the interests of *other* nations.

We say we want economic well-being for Vietnam. But this, too, is more likely to be hurt than helped by our military occupation. We can be quite sure that an independent South Vietnam, first alone and then in union with the North, will engage in the kind of economic experimentation and development that Communist countries in different parts of the world have done, and quite successfully. This is part of the modernization process that other, non-Communist nations of Asia and Africa are going through. It will be hard, progress will be uneven, and there will be sacrifices, unjustly distributed perhaps. But that is how it was in the West in its period of swift industrial growth.

What else would we presumably like to get out of staying and negotiating: political freedom? This is hard to come by in any part of the economically undeveloped world, whether Communist or non-Communist. We have not been very successful in developing it in those parts of the world dominated by the United States, though we fondly include them in "the free world." Vietnam will probably have to go through a long evolutionary struggle



Rius-Politica, Mexico: Ben Roth

for freedom, as have most countries in the world, whether Communist or not.

There is a good deal of evidence to show that political liberty is related to economic security. As nations grow less desperate in the struggle for necessities, as education spreads, as young people speak out, society becomes more open; this has been happening in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. It means that the best way we can show our concern for both the economic well-being and the political freedom of the Vietnamese is to take the billions that have gone for death and turn them to the service of life. We should offer several billions in economic aid to North and South Vietnam, with no strings attached; or, better still, we can put that money into a UN fund which will then go to Vietnam under international sponsorship.

A United States military presence is a danger to the Vietnamese and to us. Its withdrawal is neither "abdication of responsibility" nor "isolationism." Our bombing and shooting are irresponsible. In the future, we can show our responsibility by giving economic aid, when invited. We can be isolationist in the military sense; we can be internationalist in the economic and cultural fields.

The United States, thus, cannot gain anything for Vietnam by negotiating, and it *should not gain anything for itself*. Since this country does not belong in Vietnam it has no moral basis for negotiating any status for itself—certainly not military bases or troops; Vietnam has had enough of that.

There is something intrinsically wrong in the idea that the United States should participate in negotiations to decide the future of Vietnam. We are an outside power, and the fact that we have inundated the country with combat soldiers does not thereby give us any moral right to decide its fate. Perhaps might makes right, as a historical fact, but it *should* not make right; and it is the duty of citizens to assert the "shoulds," however statesmen behave.

This is true also for China, the Soviet Union, England and all other great powers. To have the future of Vietnam decided by these outside parties at an international conference is as much a violation of self-determination as was the settlement of Czechoslovakia's fate by Hitler, Mussolini, Daladier and Chamberlain in 1938 at Munich. Whatever negotiation goes on should be among the Vietnamese themselves, each group negotiating from its own position of strength, undistorted by the strength of the

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great powers. This would give the present government virtually no voice in the future of the country, because it has—without United States backing—virtually no strength. It would give the Buddhist groups an important voice because they represent significant numbers of people, whose support any future government must have. And it would undoubtedly give the National Liberation Front the major voice. (In September, 1966, the NLF reasserted its willingness to work with other Vietnamese groups in a future government, and to desist from reprisals against former foes. This has been a basic part of its program, as Staughton Lynd and Tom Hayden point out in the book, *The Other Side,* reporting their trip to Hanoi.)

In this light, to ask whether the United States will be willing to negotiate with the Vietcong seems strange. Rather, the question is: should the Vietcong be willing to negotiate with the United States? From a standpoint of moral principle it should not; from the standpoint of military reality it may have to. But it is the oppressive power of *our* country which forces this violation of moral principle, and it is the duty of American citizens—whatever the reality of power—to try to bend the power of government toward what is right.

For the United States to withdraw unilaterally, leaving the negotiating to the various groups in Vietnam, would avoid the present impasse over negotiations. This impasse is founded on a set of psychological realities which protract the war. The NLF, imbued with the spirit of patriots driving off an invading army, is willing to continue its guerrilla tactics until the United States is worn down. Besides, the Geneva experience taught it to distrust international agreements; it is confident of its skill in the jungles of Vietnam, not so confident it can outmaneuver great powers at conference tables.

To wait until all of the sensitive and stubborn elements are fitted together in that intricate mechanism of negotiation—the NLF, its sympathizers and advisers in Hanoi, the split personalities of the Johnson Administration, plus its client government in Saigon—is to consign thousands more each month to injury or death. Does it really absolve us of guilt to say that "they" won't talk with us, and so we must continue killing? Does "their" stubbornness end *our* responsibility? No actor in this complex situation has more freedom to act, has less to lose by so acting, has greater resources to fall back on, than the United States. The sanity of unilateral withdrawal is that it makes the end of the war independent of anyone's consent but our own. It is clean-cut, it is swift, it is right.

Some say that the Administration, even if it decided on such a move, could not do it, because it is not feasible "politically"; that is, the American public would not accept it. According to this argument, the "prestige" that everyone talks about our losing by withdrawal is really prestige at home.

But the argument is feeble. The Johnson Administration has *not* gained prestige from its Vietnamese actions. The national polls show that the public has gradually, steadily, lost faith in this Administration. In September, 1966, less than half of those polled throughout the country voiced support for the Administration's Vietnamese policy. It is true that the polls do not show a substantial number of Americans in favor of withdrawal. But it is also true that most Americans are tired of the war and wish we would get out, one way or another. Many think this is best done by military escalation; others by de-escalation; but the idea of *ending the war* is the most common feeling.

Withdrawal has not drawn large support, because it has not been put forward either by the Administration or by its most prominent critics. And so the public has been forced to choose within a limited set of respectable alternatives. If the Administration were to advance a new alternative, it would soon gain the respectability that *any* proposal gets which is made by the leaders of government.

It may be sad to note, but the American public (and probably *any* public anywhere) is extremely changeable and open to suggestion, especially when the suggestion comes from above. When Woodrow Wilson said the

Abu, Tribune (London): Ben Roth

United States was too proud to fight in World War I, the public went along. When he then said the United States must fight in World War I, the public again went along. FDR said he would keep the nation out of war and was re-elected. He took aggressive steps toward the Axis and we became involved in the war; he was re-elected again. When Truman got us into the Korean War, the American public supported him. When Eisenhower got us out, the public was even more enthusiastic.

The President is the most powerful molder of national opinion; he has access to television, radio, the press. Everything he says carries the weight of tradition and patriotism with it—even when he changes his policy, as so many Presidents have done in the past. Political sociologist Seymour Lipset (in *Transaction,* September-October, 1966, "The President, the Polls and Vietnam") analyzed the national poll results: "Though most Americans are willing to keep fighting in Vietnam, they clearly would prefer not to be there and are anxious and willing to turn over the responsibility to someone else. . . . The President makes opinion, he does not follow it."

The memory of the public is short; it takes little time to adjust to new realities. It accepted American tough-

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ness toward the Soviet Union. It also accepted American agreements with the Soviet Union on nuclear testing. The President has it within his power to *make* a policy politically feasible; the nation tends to rally around him, especially in foreign affairs, whatever his policy is. We must remember, too, that President Johnson, running on a platform of peace in Vietnam, defeated Goldwater by an overwhelming majority when Goldwater was asking military escalation in Vietnam. That constituency for peace still exists, waiting for Johnson to give the word.

Of course it takes courage to change a policy, to withdraw suddenly from a situation in which one has become more and more involved. It takes courage to fight off the snipers, the critics, the militarists, the fanatics. It requires either open or implied admission of error. But this is what genuine leadership is.

President Johnson has repeatedly asked his critics: "what do *you* suggest?" I am suggesting that the President should appear on national television one evening, announcing beforehand that he will make a major policy speech on Vietnam. If he goes before the nation, announces the withdrawal of American military forces from Vietnam, and states cogently, clearly, the reasons for this withdrawal, the American people will unite behind him, the editorials of support will blossom everywhere, and the angry cries of the fanatics will be drowned in an immense and overwhelming national sigh of relief.

Many critics of our policy, who know very well that the United States should leave Vietnam, do not want to ask immediate and unilateral withdrawal. That is not because they find powerful reasons against it, but because it is not a good "tactic," not "popular," not acceptable to the President and those working with him.

I believe this reasoning is based on a false notion of how political decisions are made—the notion that citizens must directly persuade the President by the soundness of their arguments. This makes two assumptions which I think are unfounded. One is that the interests of the citizens and the President are the same, so that if they both think straight they will be led to the same conclusions. Robert Michels long ago made the classic case for the fact that once we elect our representatives, they develop interests of their own; the history of human misery under government does much to support his view.

The other assumption is that the President is a rational being who can be persuaded by rational arguments. We have seen—and our recent foreign policy illustrates it—how our highest officials have become the victims of myths which they themselves help to perpetuate.

The so-called "realists" who urge us to speak softly and so persuade the President are working against the reality, which is that the President responds to self-interest rather than to rational argument. In a country where political power passes easily from one major party to another, even a minority can create a new self-interest for the President. But this cannot be done by those who dilute their passion and say only half of what they believe. The critics must begin to speak their full minds, to declare boldly what the logic of their criticism demands: that the U.S. is doing no good in Vietnam, that it is doing a frightful amount of harm, that it should immediately withdraw.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

PENSION PLANS ON THIN ICE

ANTHONY PRISENDORF
Mr. Prisendorf is a reporter on the New York Post.

Private pension plans—those set up by employers for their personnel—are meant to be a vital element in achieving "the right to a meaningful retirement," as President Johnson said not long ago when he proclaimed the start of "a great new era for older Americans." But the sad truth of the matter is that because so many pension plans fail, only about 40 per cent of the 25 million nonagricultural workers enrolled in these plans will actually receive the cash benefits to which they are entitled. What this means in terms of the country's total work force of 80 million is that only one out of every eight wage earners can count on retirement benefits to supplement social security.

These arresting percentages, based on the findings of the Internal Revenue Service and the Department of Labor, make it apparent that the whole nation has a major stake in the future of private pension plans. Secretary of Labor W. Willard Wirtz emphasized this point early in his testimony last August before a hearing of the Senate Finance Committee that was exploring ways to protect employees' pension rights. "By 1980," Wirtz said, "coverage of these plans is expected to increase from the approximately 25 million employees now covered to about 42 million. Over the same period, the present $85 billion held in these funds will probably grow to $225 billion. I can only point out that these are figures of magnitude which in my judgment warrant the country's most serious attention to this problem."

Even more pertinent to every taxpayer is the fact that the federal government indirectly subsidizes the nation's 34,000 private pension plans by more than $1 billion a year. The $6 billion that corporations contribute annually to these plans is tax-deductible as a business expense, a concession granted by the government to stimulate the continued growth of the plans. And employees who receive retirement benefits do not pay taxes on them until they begin to draw them, usually when their incomes and consequently their tax rates are lower.

The basic flaw of the plans is that they do not afford those covered adequate protection against the loss of their accrued benefits. Employers customarily reserve the

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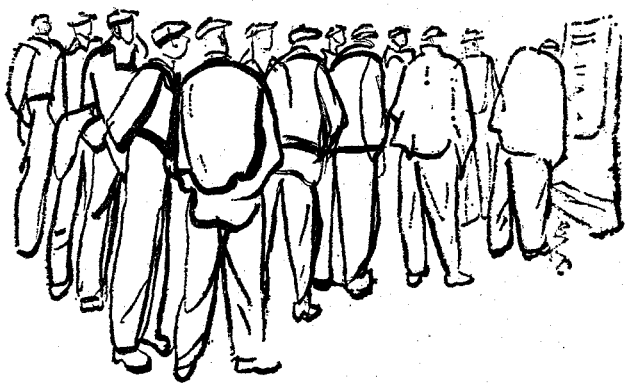
right to discontinue contributions at any time, and do not assume contractual liability to make up the difference if the assets are insufficient to pay the benefits. If the plan is terminated for any reason, the employer has no further legal obligation to contribute to the fund.

And terminations occur in alarming numbers. Although neither the Internal Revenue Service nor the Department of Labor can say exactly why, they do know that since 1954, 4,243 private pension plans, covering 183,699 workers, were discontinued. The classic illustration of what can happen occurred in 1964 when the Studebaker Corp. closed its South Bend, Ind., plant after twenty years. Through a negotiated agreement with the United Automobile Workers, the company had paid steadily into the pension plan for the previous fourteen years, amassing $25 million for benefits. But 10,500 workers were waiting to lay claim to that fund. Consequently, 3,600 who had already retired or had reached retirement



age, in this case, 60, were given first priority. Then, 4,000 employees who were between the ages of 40 and 59 and had worked for Studebaker for at least ten years, were given 15 per cent of their rightful benefits. The remaining 2,900 workers received nothing.

Aroused by the impact the Studebaker plant closing had on the economic well-being of South Bend, Sen. Vance Hartke, an Indiana Democrat, introduced bills in August, 1963, and again in March of the following year that would have provided for federal insurance of private pension plans, the insurance to be self-supporting and at no cost to the public. It would guarantee workers with vested rights in plans that they would receive up to $500 a month if the plan lapsed by the bankruptcy, closing or merger of the company, the most common causes of terminations. Premiums for the insurance would be paid by the corporations; the rates, determined by the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, would be based on the ratio of assets to liabilities in each plan. To assure maximum participation in the insurance program, the bill would have amended the Internal Revenue Code so that only those corporations subscribing to the insurance could qualify for favorable tax treatment.

In tepid response to Senator Hartke's persistent legislative efforts, Sen. Russell B. Long, a Louisiana Democrat and chairman of the powerful Senate Finance Committee, held a hearing on August 15, 1966, for "exploratory" purposes. The committee called more than fifty witnesses, from government agencies, major corporations and organized labor. From the outset of the hearings, it was evident what course of action the Johnson Administration had charted for the bill. In his opening remarks, Senator Long acknowledged that pension plan "shutdowns" raise serious questions. The Hartke bill, he then said, "does not get at these issues directly, but it does present a possible approach, which is appropriate to explore, to assure that workers actually get the pension benefits they earn." The bill expired with the 89th Congress, but Senator Hartke promises "to keep the issue alive" by offering another bill in the present 90th Congress.

Even before Senator Hartke had recognized the need for pension plan reforms, President Kennedy had taken the initiative. On March 28, 1962, he created a seven-member Cabinet committee, headed by Secretary Wirtz, to "review legislation and administrative practices relating to [private pension] programs." In its January, 1965, report to President Johnson, the committee concluded that while social security "will continue to be the nation's basic instrument for assuring reasonably adequate retirement incomes to workers, their widows and dependents," private pension plans should continue as "a major element in the nation's total retirement security program." It went on to say that the social purposes served by private pension plans constitute the "basic justification" for continued indirect public subsidy through favorable tax treatment.

The Cabinet committee made two recommendations of potentially far-reaching consequences. It said that the minimum standards of funding (accumulating sufficient reserves to assure beneficiaries that they will get what they have been promised) should be raised so that contributions to these plans "realistically relate" to the indicated benefits. In this connection, the committee thought that the overall funding process should be subject to constant review by the Internal Revenue Service. Closer scrutiny, it felt, would minimize the risk of mismanagement, and would further discourage "overfunding," a technique corporations use to abuse tax concessions.

The second, and perhaps more important, recommendation concerned vesting—a legally binding promise to pay a worker, upon retirement, benefits that correspond to his length of service. The procedure is also intended to protect employees who have built up substantial "credits" in a pension plan, but who may leave the company before retirement age. The Cabinet committee conceded that any form of benefit—pension or seniority—tends to reduce labor mobility "by tying workers to a particular employer." Nonetheless, it felt that pension plans that lack vesting provisions, or adopt unrealistic vesting criteria, have an even more deleterious effect on the labor force for three major reasons: skilled workers are tied to a declining industry longer than the prevailing job market requires; employees are inhibited from shifting to other companies, thereby curtailing their usefulness and earning power; and laid-off workers are discouraged from seeking new fields as long as they still hope to return to their former jobs and their accrued pension rights.

Vesting, as it exists today, is not geared to the facts

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of employment. When the concept was advanced in 1875, employers saw it as an effective lure to reduce the mobility of the country's labor force during Reconstruction. Today, however, technological advancements in manufacturing are displacing workers faster than they can meet the 19th century qualifications for vesting. Further, the cancellation of one relatively minor defense contract can utterly disrupt the livelihood of thousands of workers and their families. In the two-thirds of the private pension plans that offer some form of vesting, to qualify for the first level, an employee must have accumulated ten, fifteen, or even twenty years' service, and must have reached the age of 40, 45, or in some cases, 50. Aware that these arbitrary conditions are no longer practical, the Cabinet committee recommended compulsory, uniform vesting requirementts—50 per cent vesting after fifteen years, full vesting after twenty, with no age qualification; it urged further that only plans that adopt these conditions be considered eligible for tax concessions. To offset anticipated objections from corporations that such recommendations would be too costly, the committee said that eliminating the age requirement would have only a slight effect on the cost of a pension plan "since relatively few workers withdrawing before age 40 are apt to have much more than fifteen years' service."

Even so, the vesting recommendations came under strong attack, surprisingly enough, from the President's Advisory Committee on Labor-Management Policy, composed of men prominent in the fields of labor, management and public affairs. This group agreed that vesting is "desirable," but thought it should not be mandatory or a condition for tax concessions. "A vesting requirement may unduly burden the maintenance of existing plans or hamper the establishment of new plans, and may interfere with decisions regarding the allocation of resources available for pension benefits."

Despite the committee's recommendations, now two years old, and Senator Hartke's legislative efforts to bring about pension plan reform, the only discernible action on the part of the Administration—beyond the hearing on the Hartke bill before the Senate Finance Committee—has been a joint study now being conducted by the Department of Labor and the Internal Revenue Service to determine why so many plans fail. The Hartke bill's dismal record thus far may be due, at least in part, to the ill will that the President reportedly bears toward the Indiana Senator. One of the President's protégés, Senator Hartke incurred Johnson's wrath by breaking ranks and joining the Senate's "Peace Bloc" on Vietnam. In their book, *Lyndon B. Johnson: The Exercise of Power,* Rowland Evans and Robert Novak give an ample illustration of the President's sentiments: "When another Democratic Senator delivered a speech on Vietnam, Johnson telephoned to congratulate him on a constructive suggestion, and gratuitously remarked that he was 'not like that obscenity Hartke.' "

According to Merton C. Bernstein, professor of law at Ohio State University, President Johnson "has pussyfooted on pensions" and has treated the Cabinet committee's report "as if it were an orphan" because the Administration has been unwilling "to do battle without supporting troops." Organized labor, "the logical interest group to back such proposals, is missing," Professor Bernstein contends. A consultant to the departments of Labor, HEW and the Treasury, as well as counsel during the 86th Congress to a Senate subcommittee on railroad retirements, he is well qualified to make such an assessment. [See Bernstein: "The Pension Mirage," *The Nation,* June 15, 1964.] In a speech last August before the American Risk and Insurance Association, Bernstein said that organized labor has been reluctant to press for pension plan reform because "the institutional interests of some powerful unions are in conflict with the retirement security interests of many of their members." Moreover, Bernstein maintains, several unions with weak plans do not want to allocate the resources that pension reform would require. As a result, he said, the opposition to the Cabinet committee recommendations from "some important unions . . . leads the AFL-CIO not to press for either the Cabinet report or other pension reform." However, at its December, 1965, convention, the AFL-CIO did adopt a policy resolution which reads: "We renew our demand for the enactment of pension [insurance] legislation. We call upon the appropriate congressional committee to begin hearings and to report a measure to afford full protection to workers against the catastrophe of the loss of accumulated pension credits."

Although the Hartke bill was introduced while the Cabinet committee was conducting its study, there is no specific reference to the bill in the report. But the committee did make a brief comment on the general concept. While pension plan insurance "appears attractive" and is "worthy of serious study," the committee said, it raises a number of difficult questions, which the committee felt itself unqualified to answer: "Is a plan's termination an insurable risk? What types of termination could be included? Is experience available on which to set a premium? How would such an insurance program be administered?" To be consistent, representatives of HEW, the Labor Department, and the Treasury, which took part in the Cabinet committee study, recited these same questions at the Senate Finance Committee hearing to explain why they withheld endorsement of the Hartke bill.

Corporations, however, did not feel constrained to exercise caution or discretion. Without exception their officials criticized the bill as an un-American attempt to overturn the free enterprise system. Characteristic of this discourse was the statement of the United States Chamber of Commerce, which said the Hartke proposal created "a climate of uncertainty about a federal take-over of the voluntary pension plan system." The National Association of Manufacturers resorted to outright intimidation: "Any increase in cost resulting from unwarranted federal regulation . . . would inhibit the start of new plans, thereby depriving many employees of pension coverage."

Choosing to ignore the corporations' protests, Walter Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers, admonished the Johnson Administration for insisting on exhaustive research before taking a stand on the Hartke bill. "Data collected will be of great value in implementation of a sound and effective program," he told the Senate committee members. "But the filling of every last

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data gap should not be allowed to become a basis for delaying responsible consideration and early action on the legislation here under discussion."

Private pension plans are an indispensable supplement to adequate retirement incomes that will fulfill President Johnson's rosy expectations for "older Americans." But the plans are riding for a fall, says Bernstein, unless those primarily responsible for their design—banks, employers, insurers and unions—"develop a broader conception of the role of private plans and recognize their responsibility to achieve their potential." The alternative, he warns, is "for private plans to take their place alongside the dodo bird and the dirigible, which simply could not adapt to changing circumstances."

Whenever Senator Hartke explains his pension insurance bill to his constituents, he compares its merits to those of the bank deposit insurance provided by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. It should be remembered that in 1907 William Jennings Bryan made an impassioned plea for this type of insurance, but his admonitions went unheeded by lawmakers until twenty-six years later, when the country was wallowing in the depths of the depression. "Those who do not remember the past," observed Santayana, "are condemned to relive it."

CALIFORNIA REVOLUTION 2

THE KNOWLEDGE BONANZA

MEL WAX

Mr. Wax is an urban affairs writer for the San Francisco Chronicle.

San Francisco

Outside California the state's seventy-eight junior colleges and eighteen state colleges make, perhaps, less of an academic, social and psychedelic splash than do the nine campuses and 87,000 students of the University of California. But within the state's tripartite system of higher education, established under the 1960 Master Plan for Higher Education, they loom very large indeed—and larger every year.

Right now, for example, nearly 600,000 full- and part-time students, ranging from overblown teenie-boppers to overaged grandmas, are enrolled in two-year junior colleges, and the number grows by more than 10 per cent a year. And 172,000 students in the four-year state colleges are studying everything from aeronautics to zoology. Some are heading for master's degrees; others for doctorates.

There is nothing like this, anywhere else in the world. If you're fortunate enough to be a Californian, you can now advance from kindergarten to doctor of philosophy in tuition-free public schools that are said to compare in quality with the best anywhere in the Western world. In quantity, there is no comparison at all.

But less than one week after Ronald Reagan was sworn in as governor, he was hung in effigy by the students of Fresno State College. He had recommended a 10 per cent cut in higher education budgets, and had added the suggestion that it might be a good idea for university and state college students to pay tuition. Students, educators, politicians, and even such stalwarts of conservatism as Republican regent Dorothy Buffum Chandler, of the powerful *Los Angeles Times* dynasty, were furious.

While California's sun-kissed students are charged no tuition, they do pay relatively modest "fees," and in junior colleges they also pay up to $10 a year for health services and parking privileges—the *sine qua non* of California life. In state colleges, annual fees range from $96 to $102, at the university—depending on the campus—they might be as much as $243 a year.

Louis H. Heilbron, state college trustee and former chairman of the State Board of Education, justifies the system:

> Educators believe that, in the long run, California will suffer rather than benefit from any kind of tuition charge. The dollars spent on higher education usually come back multiplied in the form of increased tax contributions to the local federal and state governments after the student leaves the college or university campus.

While junior colleges are supported, for the most part, by local communities, state colleges operate on state funds, as does the University of California. For the eighteen state college campuses (four more will open soon), Chancellor Glenn S. Dumke asked $252.8 million in fiscal 1967-68. New state colleges, each of them expected to zoom to an enrollment of 20,000 students soon after their parking lots open and their pom-pom girls are chosen, cost $120 million apiece, about the price of a nuclear submarine.

Four of five California high school graduates live within commuting distance of a junior college. All they need to enroll is a high school diploma, and if they are 18 years old, they don't need even that. For the high school dropout, or the late educational bloomer, junior colleges offer salvation. Under the Master Plan, the university accepts the top 12.5 per cent of high school graduates in California; state colleges, the top 33⅓ per cent, and junior colleges take the rest.

Many junior college students later transfer to state colleges, and some make it to the University of California. During the first semester, transferees to the university score from .1 to .2 points lower than their new colleagues. Thereafter, academic performance is the same. This probably says a lot for the motivation of the students accepted by the university, and for the quality of junior college teachers.

The quality, personality and goals of state colleges vary. Some are strong in agriculture, others are urban-oriented. Some specialize in engineering and science,

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others in the arts and humanities. All told, they produce three-fourths of California's elementary and secondary school teachers. But they are not mass educational factories, as some of their critics insist.

At San Francisco State College, for example, students run their own Experimental College. They have a staff of eighty-five students and forty faculty. Paul Goodman, the noted critic of stereotyped education, was a visiting professor last year. Under this plan, more than 1,200 of San Francisco State's 18,400 students have participated in seminars ranging from "Cybernetics and LSD: A Study of the Application of Consciousness-Expanding Drugs to Technology," to "Revolutionary Capitalism" and "Conscientious Objection." And balancing these esoteric topics, seminars have dealt with such conventional subject matter as "Soviet Civilization" and "Human Growth and Development."

"I've been through the panty-raid period of student activity," said San Francisco State College President John Summerskill, commenting on the experimental college, "and visited campuses where the rah-rah spirit prevails, or where students are making direct attacks on authority as such.

"Here we have hundreds of students concerned with education, and I can't think of a better thing for them to be concerned about. The main business of the college is learning; that's what the taxpayers provide our salaries and buildings for."

Growth of the state colleges and junior colleges boomed in California following World War II. It thus parallels the state's spectacular population explosion, but, while the overall population of California is increasing by 38 per cent between 1960 and 1970, the college-age population will grow by 90 per cent. And the end is not in sight.

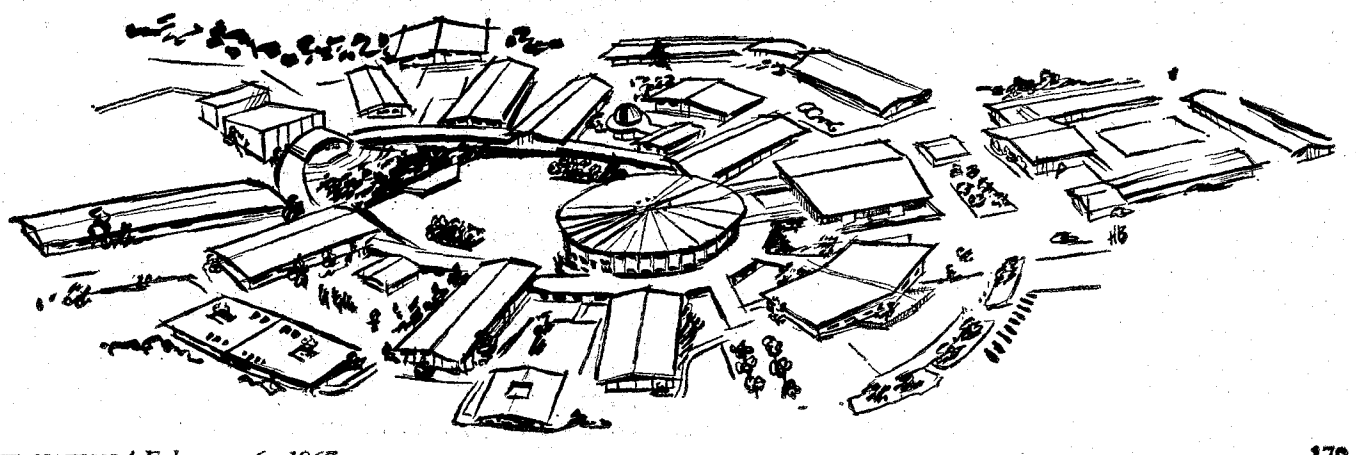
In 1921, there were seven teachers' colleges in the state, and this count remained steady until 1935, when they were officially designated "State Colleges." California State College at Los Angeles had 147 students when it opened in 1947, in skimpy, borrowed quarters on the Los Angeles City College campus. Ten years later it had moved to a lavish 97-acre spread and attracted 8,383 students. Today it has an enrollment of 20,000. California State College at Long Beach began in a rented apartment building in 1949, with a handful of students. It moved to permanent facilities in 1954. Eleven years later it had an enrollment of 20,845. A new state college—they stretch from Humboldt State near the Oregon border to San Diego State on the Mexican border—is built every other year. From 1935 to 1953, enrollment in state colleges jumped from 8,230 to 41,000 full-time students. Four years later, it had doubled. Today's total of 172,000 is expected to reach 225,000 by the end of the decade, and Chancellor Dumke predicts that in 1981 there will be 300,000 students on twenty-five campuses at a budget of $500 million.

California junior colleges date from 1907, when an enlightened state legislature told high schools they could expand to include the first two years of college. None took advantage of this opportunity until Fresno City College was created in 1910, the second oldest American public junior college in continuous operation. (The oldest is Joliet Junior College, in Illinois.) The next year, Santa Barbara High School became a junior college and, by the time the United States was fighting in World War I, there were sixteen, with a total enrollment of 1,259.

After World War II, when everything big in California exploded into something bigger, junior colleges tried to become four-year colleges, and state colleges, universities. The pressures on the legislature were tremendous. In 1959, for instance, twenty-three bills were introduced on behalf of various communities wanting their own college or university. Higher education has become the status symbol for the insecure Westerner, proof that each mountain town or desert hamlet has achieved culture, or at least knows some place close by where it can be had for the asking.

The legislators then decided it was time to call a halt to the uncontrolled, unplanned mushrooming of higher education—no matter how offensive such a check might seem to ebullient Californians and to their faith in an unlimited horizon. A commission of eight top California educators, headed by Dr. Arthur G. Coons, president of Occidental College, was told to bring order out of the jealousies and internecine warfare that threatened to split the strata of California's education mountain.

In 1960, the commission drew up a plan that nobody completely endorsed. It called for separating state colleges from the State Board of Education, and giving them their



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own Board of State College Trustees, modeled on the university's Board of Regents. Junior colleges would remain with the State Board of Education.

Some thought state colleges should stay where they were; others favored a super board of education to ride herd on state colleges, junior colleges and the university. Finally, Gov. Edmund G. Brown called warring factions to his office and told them they had labored too hard and too long for a Master Plan to lose it in the end. "Let's make it the law." They did, by unanimous legislative endorsement. Looking back recently on his eight years as governor, Brown called it his proudest achievement.

The Master Plan decreed that the University of California should be empowered to teach all subjects, and be the primary research institution. It would be the source of doctorates, but a state college, in collaboration with a university campus, could work out a "joint doctorate" program.

The university was to have sole jurisdiction over education in law, medicine, veterinary medicine, dentistry and graduate courses in architecture. This, it was hoped, would concentrate teaching talent, and occasion a minimum duplication of expensive equipment.

State colleges were given jurisdiction in the liberal arts and sciences, plus such professions as teaching, engineering, social work and other disciplines, up to and including the master's degree, that had not been staked out for the University of California.

Junior colleges, under the plan, could offer two-year associate in arts degrees, and were given exclusive rights to terminal vocational education. They were also entrusted with the task of providing two years of general education at the college level for students planning to transfer to state colleges or to the university.

It was proposed that by 1975, 50,000 undergraduates who otherwise would enter state colleges or the university would be diverted to junior colleges for their freshman and sophomore years. Sixty per cent of the enrollment at state colleges and the university would then be upperclassmen. In 1965, for the first time, more than half the new state college students came from junior colleges. The ratio was lower at the university.

The Master Plan called on the state of California to pay 45 per cent of the annual operating costs of the junior colleges by 1975, freeing them to that degree from dependence on local property taxes. (The state, through a series of bond issues, has since helped junior colleges substantially with plant-expansion programs.)

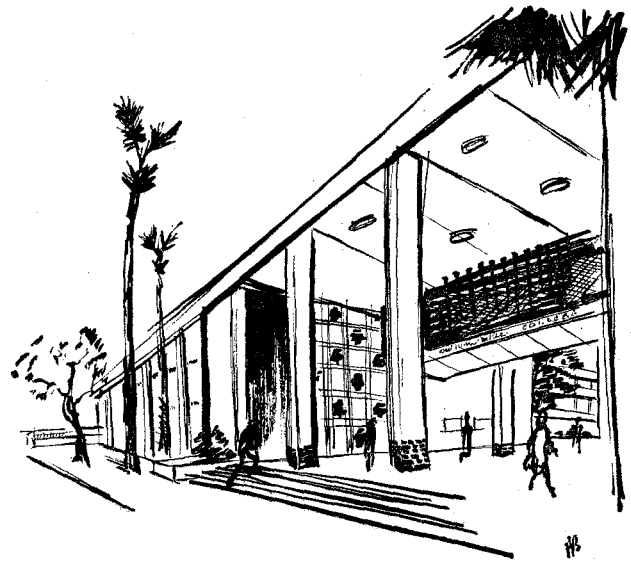
The Master Plan for Higher Education in California has served as a model not only for other states but also for other nations. Great Britain sent a delegation to study it when the English were planning for expansion; so did France.

How well has the Master Plan worked? Better than expected, but not so well as it could. The statistics on California's knowledge bonanza are impressive, but the ultimate measure must be whether or not the educational program achieves the goals assigned to it.

In 1967, for the first time, junior colleges decreed that a "C" average would be required for graduation. As Thomas W. Braden, former president of the Board of Education, carefully explained, that doesn't mean a "get tough" policy for junior college students. Anybody failing to achieve a "C" average for three consecutive semesters is subject to dismissal, but he can be readmitted. "The junior college," said Paul Lawrence, head of the State Department of Education's Division of Higher Learning, "is a place of opportunity, so he can come back again and again."

But in Braden's view junior colleges are not fulfilling their role. "The weakness of the system is that, as it has grown in California, it has tended to neglect its role as a terminal institution for vocational preparation," Braden said. "It has done so for two reasons: First, the vocational role is expensive; second, it is unprestigious."

Braden, an Oceanside newspaper publisher, suggested



that the state might set up a new and separate set of vocational colleges, supported by state rather than local funds. He made the same proposal to Governor Brown some time ago. It received passing notice in a campaign speech, but nothing has been heard of it since.

Prestige is a disease that afflicts state colleges as well as junior colleges. It is significant that almost every one of the seventy-eight junior colleges in California has dropped the offending word "junior" from its title. They are trying to build faculties of Ph.D.s, not auto mechanics. The state college system, with a faculty of some 10,000, also has recruiting problems. California must lure most of its college teachers from outside the state, and pay higher than average salaries. However, the professional status, the big federal research grants, the easier teaching loads go with university appointments, not with state college jobs.

Marc R. Tool, a professor of economics at Sacramento State College, was commissioned recently by the Academic Senate of the State College System to study the effect of the Master Plan upon these colleges. He has found, in a 200-page report, that they are "victims" of academic discrimination:

> The Master Plan, by design and by interpretation, has become a vehicle through which the California State Colleges have been relegated to an inferior and

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subordinate position relative to the University of California.

Given the directive that each segment shall strive for excellence, the Master Plan has created a condition in which the State colleges cannot aspire to excellence because they are not provided with adequate financial means and the relevant policy options to make possible the achievement of excellence of which they are capable.

According to Professor Tool, the university gets 58 per cent of state support funds for 38 per cent of the students, while state colleges limp along with 42 per cent of the money for 62 per cent of the students. He contends that the university professor gets more pay, more sabbaticals, more secretarial and technical help, more research money, and a lighter teaching load than his state college counterpart.

Junior colleges make similar complaints. The Arthur D. Little Company, a private research firm, recently recommended that they be divorced from the State Board of Education and given their own chancellor, and their own bureaucracy, as are state colleges and the university.

Junior college faculty members consider themselves oppressed. A teacher at College of Marin, just north of San Francisco, complained that when he gave his students failing grades in English he was rebuked by his superiors on the ground that either his course was too difficult or he was grading too hard. The possibility that his students were not bright enough was not considered.

"If what they want is some kind of social welfare program to keep kids off the streets for two years after high school, O.K.," added his wife. "But let's be honest about it. Let's not call it a college. And let's use social workers for teachers."

The junior colleges, like state colleges, observe varying standards of excellence, and they have different missions. Some offer strong academic courses in general education, and are successful in producing transfer students for state colleges and the university. Others concentrate on terminal education, and still others on vocational training.

At one time, the ratio of academic and vocational programs in California junior colleges was half and half. Now the pendulum has swung heavily to the academic side. The new trend is typified by Foothill College, which has an extensive liberal arts curriculum. Less than ten years old, this campus in the foothills of the Santa Cruz Mountains of Northern California has more than 7,000 students on its magnificent 122 acres.

Foothill's thirty-six brick and redwood buildings, including an Olympic-sized swimming pool and a 1-acre library, and its sheltered, car-free pedestrian walks, give it an atmosphere of quiet, rural peace and isolation. Within a 1,000-seat auditorium, blessed with near-perfect acoustics, students learn the performing arts by performing them, and both students and nearby Los Altos residents enjoy guest performances of the San Francisco Symphony and other traveling artists. One of the great benefits of the state and junior college system in California is their intellectual and cultural impact on communities where they are located.

Foothill also has a 3,500-car parking lot, the essential ingredient for a community college that depends on commuters. There are no dormitories at Foothill, nor are there any at most junior colleges, or at many state colleges. Foothill puts heavy emphasis on liberal arts. But it also offers associates in arts degrees in data processing, electronics, industrial ceramics and other arcane specialties. Graduates frequently are snapped up at starting salaries of $900 a month.

Whatever its faults and problems, California characteristically and vigorously has launched a massive program of democratic higher education on a scale never before attempted by any state or nation. That there are shortcomings is not surprising. What is remarkable is the abounding optimism, the monumental scope and the high promise of the effort.

LETTERS *(continued from page 162)*

Union a single Yiddish school, a Yiddish newspaper, a Yiddish theatre, a Yiddish publishing house, as a means of demonstrating the response of Soviet Jews. And if the school is not filled to capacity, and if the newspaper is not oversubscribed, and the theatre is not sold out, if the supply of books is not exhausted—then we may be persuaded of the reality of alleged Jewish self-alienation. . . .

Absent this test, we challenge such unwarranted speculations as those of Mr. Werth, especially when deceptively decked out as hard fact. . . .

Phil Baum, Director
Commission on International Affairs
American Jewish Congress

Paris

DEAR SIRS: Mr. Baum seems to suggest that I am speaking from hearsay, or on the basis of some casual visit to the Soviet Union. May I point out that I spent seven years there between 1941 and 1948, and have since gone there on several lengthy visits. I have met thousands of Russians and hundreds of Jews in the Soviet Union. I do not deny for a moment that there was officially whipped-up anti-Semitism in Russia during the last Stalin years; nor do I deny that there is some discrimination even now. There are very few Jewish generals in the army, very few Jews on the party's Central Committee, and Jews are entirely, or almost entirely, excluded from the Foreign Service. But in most other fields of activity they hold a prominent and honorable place.

I don't think it can be denied that the assimilationist tendencies are strong among the 80 per cent of Jews who, under the 1959 census, declared not Yiddish but Russian or Ukrainian to be their first (or only) language. Nevertheless, I agree that the situation continues to be anomalous, both as regards the Yiddish-speaking and the would-be assimilationist Jews.

But instead of making unrealistic proposals like Mr. Baum's, would it not be much more important to assume that Mr. Kosygin means what he says, and take steps to permit Jews wanting to leave the Soviet Union actually to do so? As far as I know, Kosygin's "pledge" is the first of its kind ever made by a top Soviet leader, at least in the last thirty years or more. I cannot make out whether Mr. Baum refuses to take Mr. Kosygin's pledge seriously, or whether he is simply not interested in it. And if not, why not? In any case, he does not mention it. Yet, assuming that there are many Jews who would like to leave Russia (and there seems little doubt about that as regards some of the "unassimilated" Jews), the Kosygin statement surely offers opportunities for action which should not be neglected by the major Jewish organizations outside Russia. I do not believe that Kosygin had not carefully considered in advance every word of his statement.

Alexander Werth

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Frost's Way: Making the Most of It

ROBERT FROST: The Early Years, 1874-1915. *By Lawrance Thompson. Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 641 pp. $12.50.*

QUENTIN ANDERSON
Mr. Anderson teaches English at Columbia University and this year is visiting professor at the University of Sussex, England.

The Frost I loved as an adolescent disappeared down a corduroy road laid with honorary degrees. It was vulgar of me not to remember that the poems were still there—even though they ran counter to the grain of impersonal modernism. But my feeling that the man was somehow indispensable to the poems was right, though inarticulate. (Little I cared that Eliot was a churchwarden!) And the fuss about Frost *was* embarrassing in the later years. Zealous middle-brow devotion lapped the hermit crab, and made a final shell for him against his lifelong terror of abandonment. The poems seemed to have entered the civil service; their character and their genesis were accidentally obscured. Lawrance Thompson's Frost *Letters* (1964) had an editorial acerbity which cut through much of the guff, and the letters themselves had enough of Frost's wit, charm, slovenliness, meanness, fidelity to his powers, to make an image of sorts. They also revealed a habit of involvement with persons of insufficient character, on whom he turned savagely when they began to tug at *him* for narcissistic supplies. But the poems were those of a man in a terrible fix, and the letters, increasingly and gracefully public in later years, hid the fix.

This first volume of a two-volume biography quickly tells us what armed Thompson against the obvious guff; the story he had to tell is a story of agonizing personal extremity that, once you have grasped it, blows away popular pieties. Thompson has made it possible —within limits I'll note—to understand Frost. It ought to be explained that this biography is said to be an instrument to play one's own Frost upon. I quote the beginning of the headnote to the index:

> NAMES, PLACES, DATES are correlated with topics, intepretations, conclusions —all previously deployed on three separate levels: Introduction, Central Narrative, Notes. Because this Index thus makes available some outlines, configurations, summaries, which are not explicitly given elsewhere, it amounts to a fourth level of ordering.
>
> Readers are particularly invited to browse through the Robert Frost entries under the forty-three topical subheads. . . .

The internal limitation is that the "Central Narrative" lacks the crispness of the editorial work on the *Letters*, or the Introduction and Notes of this book. Thompson lived over twenty-five years of his life as Frost's official biographer. The tone of their conversations appears to have gotten spilled on his narrative. The laxity of the prose allows of such phrasings as "mother's heartfelt grief," or "deeply ingrained fears," or "memorable and panoramic views," or "thought-felt justification," and of this sentence: "Under the circumstances, it was fortunate for him that he had inherited from his grieving mother the balancing instinct for enjoying the comic aspects of life." Such sentences lie like logs across the path of Thompson's story. But the story does get told: Frost lived a desperate life in his formative years, and he, quite as much as Emily Dickinson, literally saved himself with poetry.

I see two external limitations as well. To cover the years 1874-1915, as Thompson does in this volume, is to show what made Frost Frost, and to encounter enough of his mature accomplishment to make the account dangerously complete. Taking Thompson's collection of Frost's letters for granted, I'm not sure I want to know any more *about* Frost. I can read the later poetry for myself, and as for the honorary degrees, I've been there before. The second bother comes later and has to do with the literary biography as a kind. Meanwhile, what is the essential part of Thompson's account?

The forty-three topical subheads under "Robert Frost" in the index do not include "Mother," but that is what they spell. If I understand the two careful sentences in the book, Frost slept with his mother from the time of his father's death when he was 11 until he was 16; and thereafter, until his marriage at the age of 21, on a cot in her room. His father, a Harvard graduate of 1872, who had had Copperhead sympathies, moved to San Francisco from the cotton mill town of Lawrence, Mass., to which the family returned after his death, and was a graduate of the same high school in which Frost won his first distinction as a poet and, with his future wife, co-valedictorian. (Frost remembered his father, a newspaper man and minor figure in Democratic politics, as a poor speaker.)

Frost's father, often drunken and violent, had had sharp difficulties with his Scotch wife, who was older, a bit fey and withdrawn, a devout Swedenborgian. She brought her children up on tales of moral heroism. Mrs. Frost returned to schoolteaching after she was widowed, and one of the attempts her son made to fulfill the emotional demands of his relationship to her consisted in leaving Dartmouth to replace her in a class infested by bullies, whom he, as a beginning teacher, beat into submission. Thompson notes that his mother could easily have been transferred without her son's intervention. Frost's sister was queer as a child and always at odds with him. She became insane in middle age.

Frost had an absolute need to be enfolded—and, of course, a bitter resentment at being enfolded. Tugging at apron strings and reaching behind to be sure they were securely knotted was his pattern until he discovered the possibility of anchoring himself in poetry. Thompson says that his speech had been markedly cultivated until the period in Derry when he began to take on Yankeeisms; the wryness and the spiritual drawl were lightning rods to draw off the terror of being an identifiable husband, father, farmer. When—earlier—his high school lover refused to marry him until she had finished college, he made a symbolic plunge into what he feared most, the darkness—of Virginia's Great Dismal Swamp. He was beset by a fear of abandonment, and prone to alarm that his wife would think he had abandoned *her* when he made a daylong excursion. In one of his letters to Louis Untermeyer, Frost makes this apology to account for a difference that had arisen between them: "I was once gone back on cruelly though deservedly and ever since I have once in so often had one of these mad paroxysms of unbelief in human faithfulness."

Frost staggered and almost went down in the crucial years just before and dur-

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ing his life on the farm at Derry. He moved, one imagines, back and forth between asking more of a woman than any woman can give, and demanding of himself a heroism, an enfathering, more complete than the world affords. The poems are not identifiable with or accounted for by either impulse—even though Frost often made immediate subjects of his fears of darkness and emptiness, his ambivalence about being sheltered. They are brave and successful counterattacks, each a "momentary stay against confusion," in Frost's famous phrase. The farm at Derry had been bought for him by his paternal grandfather whom he hated, gratuitously, as it seems to Thompson, but that hatred appears a part of the pattern as does the denunciation of a remote, Indian-killing Frost in a poem Thompson prints in an appendix.

In an enthusiastic review of *Georgian Poetry: 1911-1912*, D. H. Lawrence wrote: "The time to be impersonal is gone. We start from the joy we have in being ourselves, and everything must take colour from that joy," and he is referring to the Georgians, of whom at that moment he felt himself one. Frost's first volume, *A Boy's Will*, was being assembled in that year, his first in England, and in the next year, 1913, when that volume was published and Frost was putting together *North of Boston*, he came to know and prize Lascelles Abercrombie and Wilfred Gibson, contributors to the volume Lawrence (also a contributor) had reviewed. Frost's mode of asserting his existence was indeed to put persons, to put the cadence of the voice, into poems. The "sound of sense," playing against the iambic beat was to be his way of describing his poetic aim in the period of Thompson's first volume; in practice this meant an identifiable human voice or voices.

Pound was quick to admire and review Frost, but what he and Eliot were actually elaborating could hardly have been more at odds with what Frost was doing, what Lawrence had happily proclaimed. Whatever else their strain of modernism came to mean, it didn't mean making persons, in this direct sense, poetic presences. It was storing humanity in poems, not manifesting it. This is simple and explicit in Eliot's declaration of the impersonality of poetry. Words must be rescued from every kind of character-building, mores-endorsing use and devoted to the making of structures. Lawrence has ever since endured the peculiar modern and post-modern hatred felt for those who insist on the being and the primacy of persons; Frost has been slathered with love. I mustn't try to discuss the quality of that love before trying to say what writing, as if speaking to other men, meant to Frost.

Frost lived his most desperate years in the company of demons, darkness, a wife whom he persistently—though not of course wholly—misconstrued as obdurate, chilly, angelic. In his world without scale, of enormous magnifications and terrifying minutenesses, the man of average sensual endowment was a princely wonder whom he created for himself and made the bearer of his frightening news. The region of measured things—orchids, fields, selectmen, constellations, everything taken for granted by others—was an exhilarating marvel for him, which he proved his title to by representing them in human cadences. The voice he contrived handled matters both large and small: the nuisance of feeding the chickens presented itself, together with the fear of darkness and death outdoors; there was no scale in him except the one the voice created.

Having built his shelter of cadences he added to it and remodeled it; he could not step outside it. Some people still write about Frost as if he had chosen to celebrate a particular region or the pastoral realm, but his actual awakening was not to a particular choice but to the very possibility of speaking to others in print. That he thereafter stuck with New England is the consequence of the fact that his whole usable past was his own poems, which meant that it was also his present. He said very firmly that he had never changed, though he could hardly explain why. But so it was. Robert Frost was co-eternal with *Collected Poems*.

Most criticism of Frost is too much impressed by his ideas and not perhaps enough by his poetry as it comes. Here Randall Jarrell is indispensable; no less indispensable are the remarks Lionel Trilling made at the dinner on Frost's 85th birthday, which let the cat out of the bag. Thompson's first volume provides a permanent home for the cat. Thompson's readers are not likely to be surprised that a man so circumstanced became "a terrifying poet." But I read no signs anywhere that Trilling has been followed up, and we only have to turn to Jarrell's brilliant parade of appreciations, which concludes with fervid praise of Frost as a "complete or representative poet" who rendered the whole world of his experience, to see how much opposition one is likely to meet in saying what sort of personal voice Frost achieved. Jarrell is obviously right and just as obviously wrong: Frost *is* magnificently what he is, but where, through what fluke of fatal resignation, did we lose the right to say what he is, and not only the right but almost the terms and the ability?

Thompson, in his preface, bows nervously to the stony orthodoxy which proclaims the dangers of the intentional fallacy, making the minimal plea that "Frost made his imagination work primarily with actual images and events familiar to him from his own experiences at first or second hand." He goes on: "He did endow these images with poetic meanings which do indeed face two ways, and his best poems are esthetically viable without any reference to his biography. But any reader who understands the relationships between the inner and outer faces of these poems is able to derive from them two different kinds of enjoyment which are not necessarily unrelated." *Not necessarily unrelated*! Shades of epistemology! How *do* ideas get into our heads? asks the 18th century; how can a body of poetry possibly be related to the quality of somebody's humanity? asks the 20th. Instead of psychophysical dualism

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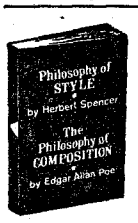
we have a dualism between makers and things made. But Thompson has a better case than he seems to know. It just happens that Frost is not a modernist poet in the sense that he is *aiming* at impersonal structures; he is of the old world in which persons counted. The central trouble with Thompson's book is that he hasn't been brave about the relation of persons and poems: he writes a rather flabby narrative because he deep down feels that attention to the man he found so fascinating isn't finally the same thing as attention to the poems. The finality is unreachable, but it is no less his job. In these cultural circumstances, or in the response of Thompson and most of his colleagues to them, literary biography is demonstrably an impossible form, and Thompson's characterization of his book as an engine offering four levels of approach to Frost is testimony to his awareness, his somewhat imperfect awareness, of the problem. He cannot be wholly blamed, and I admit that I feel as if I were interrupting him, since this is only the first volume.

People do not now have the authority of existence in the same measure that poems have such authority. This makes difficulties for biographers. But it also troubles people at large and explains, I think, why Frost is a popular poet. Part of the explanation is clearly that he offers an apprehensible surface, but the more interesting possibility is that the poetry of this man without a scale, this intransitive man, was couched in the spoken mode. His poems lend to persons some of their lost power to connect an assertion of self with the particular circumstances of their lives. The rather awful pathos of the Goldwater followers arises out of their desire to do this, although they clearly can't. It is a marginal humanity that the poems express; it is a poetry very much after the fact of the world, a clinging to the raft of existence. It is extraordinarily good of its kind, and for readers who are not asking for glorious possibilities (each of us is such a reader at times), readers who are not canted toward a transforming hope, it affirms, even though barely, or better just because barely, our heavily circumstanced lives.

Perhaps Frost really is that rarity among moderns, a good poet who is popular for the very reasons that he is good, voicing an invitation to climb to that isolated ledge on which he makes "The Most of It."



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Real American Life

CHICAGO RENAISSANCE: The Literary Life in the Midwest 1900-1930. *By Dale Kramer. Appleton-Century. 369 pp. $7.95.*

DAN LEVIN

Mr. Levin is the author of Mask of Glory, *a novel of the Marines (McGraw-Hill) and* Stormy Petrel, *a study of Maxim Gorky (Meredith). He teaches creative writing and comparative literature at Post College, Long Island University.*

Dale Kramer returned at last from the big cities to his home town, Sigourney, Ia., where he wrote two books of importance.

In *The Wild Jackasses,* he saluted the American Populists—knightly native radicals without fear or theory. His lens swept from the 1870s to the 1930s. In the final chapter he presented a rather stirring picture of a special Valhalla with reserved space for the agrarian warriors —Sockless Jerry Simpson, Ignatius Donnelly, General Jim Weaver, Mary Ellen Lease, George Norris, Bill Lemke, Art Townley, Milo Reno. There the confused heroes of the common folk would "celebrate their many, if usually belated, victories."

His last book, *Chicago Renaissance,* has more depth and a sharper focus on the first two decades of our century. In it he traces the rise of modern American realism, our main literary heritage, by following the interwoven lives of ten figures: Floyd Dell, Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Carl Sandburg, Edgar Lee Masters, Vachel Lindsay, Francis Hackett, Maurice Browne, Harriet Monroe, Margaret Anderson. The book re-establishes — even for those who know this but sometimes forget— the nature of the American writing that counts most in the world's literary history, and its origins in real American life.

Markers are set up (some known, some perhaps not so well known) for those who care about American society and literature. They are useful, although markers are always too general and partly misleading. For example: that the publication of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie,* in 1900, opened in literature our modern age. That the literary renaissance was borne by the energy and dreaming ambitions of small-town Midwestern boys (and girls) who came into electric contact with the big cities. That native radicalism, anarchism and socialism were elements in forming the emotional and intellectual lives of most of the renaissance makers; this is important for any historical understanding. That Harriet Monroe's *Poetry* magazine, and Margaret Anderson's *Little Review,* and the Chicago Little Theatre, were crystallizers.

Dale Kramer called it a *Chicago* renaissance. No name is completely truthful, but some are better than others. Like the Populist movement, the literary one rose in the Midwest, and Chicago was the gravity center. He could have called it the American renaissance and been just as right, but "Chicago" gives focus and structure. He believed its salient achievements in literature were Dreiser's; and Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*; and Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio.* He felt the renaissance crested around 1916, and that by 1921, "the stream was no longer vigorous." This makes sense, for the First World War, like all great upheavals, was necessarily destructive, and the impact of the mental catastrophe would need a few years to be charted.

Maybe the most important point he makes is the absolute relation between literature and life. The creative impulse works mysteriously, but always on the basis of the human facts. Dale Kramer's tracing of the origins of Dreiser's *Sister Carrie, Jennie Gerhardt* and the Cowperwood novels, Masters' Spoon River poems, Anderson's *Winesburg* and other writings, Lindsay's wonderful "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," makes clear again what should always

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have remained clear. It is a service to literature.

His method is careful collation of details, then linked and illumined (in his case, often by side-of-the-mouth comments). It is the method par excellence of cultural history. He garnered the details from long talks and correspondence with those yet alive, like Dell, and from multitudinous books, memoirs and letters, doggedly researched. Here is Dreiser's estimate of his father: ". . . a crank, a tenth-rate Saint Simon or Francis of Assisi . . . an illustration of the beaten or at best psychologically depressed"; and of his mother: ". . . one of the most perfect mothers a man ever had . . . a happy, hopeful animal mother, with a desire to live, and not much constructive ability wherewith to make real her dreams. . . ." Kramer tells of Dreiser's poetry being rejected consistently by Eugene Field, writer of sentimental verse and (typically) a power controlling access to publication, and affords a glimpse of Dreiser at the height of fame, in a phone booth, kicking backward "like a bull elephant" at a girl clinging to him, while he phones another. Sherwood Anderson's father as a motivating force is illuminated by Kramer's comment: "Rarely has anyone been so corroded by hatred of a parent, or been so relentless in seeking imaginative vengeance." The whole texture of Anderson's work is clarified, including the reasons for the failure of so much of it, and the achievement of *Winesburg*, where hatred is held in leash and the work becomes art.

His portraits are vivid. Sandburg, the "monolith," riding the rails on the bum (and careful, as always, with his money); at the same time his "Chicago poems" are put in needed social perspective. Masters, too-good boy, yanked around by his family like a sack of potatoes, then morose Greek scholar, undistinguished law partner of Clarence Darrow, unhappy married man who lost a girl he had courted to the prize fighter, Gentleman Jim Corbett, finally standing at Emerson's grave and admitting that life had "cornered" him; starting his *Spoon River Anthology* (on the conscious level) as a doodle, a morose spoof on *The Greek Anthology*. Vachel Lindsay, prolonged adolescent with his cult of male *and* female virginity, battling all his life against his home town (Springfield, Ill.; even issuing war bulletins); tramping the country (map of the soul's universe in his pocket) reciting "rhymes for bread" to startled or bemused farmers. And Vachel Lindsay draining a bottle of Lysol to end the visionary inner struggle which gave the land some of its true, exciting poetry.

The thousand details make the difference. They are the reality of life and show the springs of creativity. The stress on social ideas and on "love and marriage and freedom" is correct; these are components of literature.

The flaws in the book are those in Kramer himself. Largely, they are inextricable from the virtues. In many ways he was an heir of the Populists. (In the thirties, he edited the *Farmers' Holiday* magazine, organ of the last Populist hero, Milo Reno.) This back-

THE HARVESTERS' VASE

All Things are gods.

After having accomplished
the embarkation of the lion there was the
unearthing of the orange sarcophagus and the
polished stone gaming board and its tourmaline
counters. And it could not be but a sign of their
desire that they painted fish upon their corpses'
heads and necks.

The entire world for them
was gods.

At a harvest festival, fifty men stepped
into a line of march and crossed this black steatite
field on the ripe earth; the wheat shoots were
sharp as crystal on the naked feet of those gleaners
of the Wheat-God's pleasure.

The wine pouch flew
from man to man. The sheaves' dried seed fell
and stuck to their brows; their skin pulled tight
across their skulls for the harvest was hard and
winds curled that summer from the air harrowing
their bodies into craters where they stood all day
collecting the ripe lava of the fields.

When
the temple came in view, cocked on the hill
preened and unconsolable, riot struck the
harvesters in their inner ear. They fell into a
run, belching, clutching at rocks, bleeding,
their bodies bare and black in the sun's mill and
slammed into the sacred magazines where they upturned
jugs of wine and sacred creams and muted by this
sacral fancy, in the steatite thunder of their feast,
they climbed into the precincts of the
Mother-Goddess-of-the-Country-Side who ran
out of their ears and mouths like a heavy wine.

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ground saved him from theory, Communist or other, and theory ruins most writers. But the very independence (and know-nothing tang) of the Populist tradition, combined with the romantic newspaper man ideal, made him diffident, for too long, about approaching literature seriously. He wasted years on unpromising subjects like Ross of *The New Yorker*. His biography of Heywood Broun is valuable, but Broun (model of the hard-drinking newspaper man and social fighter) lived on his own surface, and so Kramer stayed there with him. Only in *The Wild Jackasses* did he find real scope, and then *Chicago Renaissance*. In these last books, his diffident image of himself as the wisecracking reporter, the *Yank* correspondent who tracked down Tokyo Rose, the man who worshiped Broun and feuded with Westbrook Pegler, gives way to the image of the writer who deals firmly with a large theme, from both outer and inner experience.

Like the gallant Populists, Dale Kramer will have to celebrate his belated victory in some Valhalla. He died just as *Chicago Renaissance* was being published. The country, hardly knowing it, has lost one of its best social and literary historians.

Bright Graffiti

UP THE JUNCTION. *By Nell Dunn. J. B. Lippincott. 127 pp. $3.95.*
WELLINGTON ROAD. *By Margaret Lassell. Penguin. 169 pp. $1.25 paper.*

ELMER BENDINER
Mr. Bendiner, writer and editor, is the author of The Bowery Man *(Thomas Nelson).*

Any observer who sets out to depict the poor as merely people who happen to be broke will miss the flavor and significance of the brash outlaw who passes his life scrawling witty obscenities on the pedestals of majestic monuments to piety, virtue, honor and affluence.

In Britain, it seems, the graffiti are brighter than in the United States where the white working class tends to behave like financially embarrassed bourgeois. Nell Dunn, in her slender volume of vignettes, *Up The Junction*, lovingly depicts the leather-jacketed motorcycle set of Battersea, fornicating happily in the hallways of housing projects with girls who make candy in sweat shops or act as come-ons in clip joints.

Her lovers are at once brittle and tender, like the lad who woos his girl

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to a private doorway and then at a loss, pleads: "Do me a favor." "What is it?," she asks. "Seduce me," he says.

Nell Dunn's Battersea people are brought to life with sure artistry and a remarkable economy of words. Truth is summed up almost too neatly, but that may be a failing of the form. Many of the pieces in this book were written for magazines and meant to glow briefly in perishable newsprint. In book form the vignette becomes self-defeating. Literary devices—such as the quoting of lyrics of popular songs as a kind of counterpoint—are good when used sparingly but lose effectiveness with repetition.

But if Battersea, in Nell Dunn's handling, becomes almost too beguiling, *Wellington Road* by Margaret Lassell is good to keep handy as an antidote. Miss Lassell stayed with a family in a modern housing project, a new slum on the edges of a British factory town. And here—with fidelity but without artistry—is a bleak record of unmitigated dreariness.

In this diary she chronicles the defeat of a man injured in an industrial accident, eking out a life of sorts on a pension. He maintains a semblance of usefulness by doing the housework, thereby depriving his wife of her function. He sends her out to whore when cash is low, and whines jealously when he suspects a lover.

Somehow the children grow up feeding on crumbs of love amid the shoddy spectacle of adult striving and failing. Small crimes and multiple abortions mark the passing of the days and nights on Wellington Road where nobody starves and nobody lives. Margaret Lassell's diary convicts a way of life on circumstantial evidence alone. If the reader wants to people the scene with flesh and blood he can call on Nell Dunn.

Both in Battersea and Wellington Road the disasters of life are shrugged off with a plucky "never mind." But one of Nell Dunn's boys sums it all up when he says: "It's 'never mind'—for life."

To the Woolf House

STANLEY POSS
Mr. Poss teaches English at California State College at Fresno.

Outside of graduate students grubbing up dissertation topics no one reads Leslie Stephen today. One remembers him vaguely as a late Victorian worthy (like Archer or Butler or Gosse) who did some good work shattering idols, but one remembers rather more vividly his fictional counterpart in his daughter's *To The Lighthouse*, the academic philosopher Mr. Ramsay, vainly struggling to get to "Q," vainly, that is, because his thought is limited by its empiricist preconceptions to "P." Similarly, Virginia Woolf's husband had long been for me a shadowy presence; a good liberal, no doubt, a capable editor, even, one had heard somewhere, a writer of some distinction. But Virginia's was the dominating if sibylline personality, and when she died in 1941 I should imagine that few persons outside the immediate group doubted that the Woolf name was dead also. Indeed it was something of a shock to realize that Leonard Woolf was still alive when the first of his memoirs, *Sowing*, appeared in 1960. This marvelous evocation of Edwardian Cambridge during the days of Moore and Russell, McTaggart and Wittgenstein, Keynes and Forster and Strachey and Clive Bell, and The Apostles (the elite group of undergraduates who clustered around Moore), was followed a year later by *Growing*, which describes the author's life as a civil servant in Ceylon between 1904 and 1911. Then came *Beginning Again* in 1964, a book whose rigorously honest and precisely detailed account of the early years of his life with Virginia (1911-18), their discovery that she was subject to fits of insanity, and his attempts to deal with them is compelling from the first pages and once and for all establishes Leonard Woolf as an important writer. No reader who has been harrowed and delighted by these books is ever likely to place their author merely as Virginia's husband, the fellow who turned the crank at The Hogarth Press.

So one's initial feeling of mild surprise that Leonard Woolf had survived into the sixties changed to—well, whatever it is one feels on encountering a mind of utter candor and independence, stoical, fearless and compassionate, represented in a prose combining art and force. After *Growing* I found myself hoping that he would be able to round out his autobiography, and when *Beginning Again* appeared two years ago I felt that a solid blow had been struck for our old mortality. But after all, that book took him only to 1918, and clearly he needed at least two more volumes to finish his story. Thus when I found myself in Newhaven last July, on my way home after a year in Cairo, I remembered that the Woolf's old home, Asham House, was not more than 10 miles away, and I resolved to see it. No doubt even then I had a half-formed desire to see the owner himself, forgetting for the moment that he had said in *Beginning Again* that he and his wife had moved to the nearby village of Rodmell in 1919.

But my conscious motive was Asham House itself. I inquired in the village of Iford, on the Lewes road, and a tractor driver said he knew just the man for me. I followed his Fordson through the village lane—southern England; is there any place like it?—to a dairy where I met an ex-German with some milk pails who smiled broadly when he saw the German tourist plates on the Volkswagen, and greeted me with "*Wie gehts*?" He'd come over after the war, loved England, knew that Mr. Woolf was a famous writer, and knew also that he no longer lived at Asham House. But why not call on Mr. Woolf himself, he suggested, as my face sagged; he's just down the road at Monks House in Rodmell. Probably gardening just about now. Ask anyone you see, they all know him. Left off the main road through the village, Monks House on the right. Good. Cheer-o! '*f wiedersehen*!

Monks House, a rambling, pleasant, overgrown old cottage which Leonard Woolf has owned for forty-seven years, sits at the edge of the lane through Rodmell, like most houses in the villages. (The reader will find Woolf's own description of Asham House, Monks House and a brief commentary on life in a Sussex village fifty years ago in the early chapters of *Beginning Again*.) We knocked at the gate. Waited, admired the old place with its profusion of flowers, trees, vines and shrubs, its winningly irregular air of having "just growed," its Mother Goose quality. No response. Knocked again, entered cautiously. "Hallo! Is anyone there?" Large spaniel rushed barking upon us but only to fawn and horse around. "Nice dog, *good* dog." Then around the corner came a slender old man in flannels, blue shirt, vest, heavy shoes, gardening gloves, trowel. White hair like a brush and faded bleak eyes—no glasses—peering from a long, thin, tough, aristocratic, unself-pitying old face. A formidable face, a stoical face, an unsurprisable face, just seeing for the five thousandth time what's going on. "Mr. Woolf, is it?" I mumbled through the explanation and apology, more conscious than I wanted to be of that wintry gaze and, behind it, the un-

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asked question: "What do you *really* mean by that?"—the question with which, according to Leonard Woolf's memoirs, G. E. Moore so often paralyzed The Apostles at Cambridge, freezing their undergraduate fluency into sheepish inarticulateness.

He accepted what I said, however, not surprised, not put out. I asked about Asham House, as a pump primer. He told us that it now had a cement plant for a neighbor, that he supposed it had fallen on hard times. He wrote in the morning, gardened after lunch. Care to see the garden? So for forty-five minutes we meandered about the very extensive grounds admiring the orchards and garden, enjoying the sun, and learning that he regards Charleston as the one American city the tourist must not miss. Had we seen it? No, we. . . . Had we ever been to the South at all? Well no, but. . . . Typical Americans, he thought; travel all around Europe but never think of South Carolina. He was fascinated by the South, like Quentin's roommate Shreve ("Tell me about the South. Why do people live there? Why do they live at all?"), and I felt I had let our side down rather badly in not being an expert on the region. Texas, however, really was beyond the pale, he believed, in spite of what a friend at the university had written extolling Austin as a Periclean Athens of the New World. Dallas; Kennedy: simply impossible. He thought that it had been two and a half centuries since the English had murdered their king or prime minister.

But this was as close as he came to the role of entertainer. As one may imagine, he is not frivolous. The years lie on him. He does not sparkle, though the books reveal a humor with a cutting edge. He has long passed the stage of thinking about making an impression in either appearance or speech. He is no fashioner of *aperçus*; one would no more expect to find him guilty of the vanity of epigrams than of clothes. His virtues as a human being and as a writer are the virtues of the plain style. He was not inclined to talk of his work or his wife's. But what did *I* do, now? (Teach, write some.) Teach what? (Englit, Amlit.) Impossible task, he should think. Can one really teach literature? And American literature *is* English literature, is it not? Well, I said, that was the general impression in Cairo too. He was interested in Cairo; was it anti-Semitic? The regime distinguishes theoretically between Jews and Zionists, I replied, but in practice most Jews turn out to be Zionists. Most unfortunate, he said. Now when he was in Germany in the thirties anti-Semitism never touched him personally, though the regime was pouring out diatribes night and day. He wondered whether political propaganda really worked, an observation which, coming from a man who had written a dozen books on history and politics, struck me as unexpected, to say the least. Can he really have said that? Perhaps my memory deceives me.

Anyhow, he'd had enough. We took a last look south from the slight eminence of his garden at Asham House (barely visible) and the cement plant (very visible) and the Channel, thanked him for his courtesy in admitting strangers to his house, and started to say we hoped we'd soon be reading the fourth volume of his memoirs, then caught ourselves in confusion, conscious of a *gaffe* since we were saying in fact "hope you live long enough." He got it, all right; his January face creased, he gave us a look both bleak and kind, frosty and gentle, and said that he would take the liberty of joining us in our hope; perhaps indeed he could count on our understanding that his was even more fervent. We shook hands, he bade us goodby, and returned to his phlox and roses, his cabbages and currants.

Gourmet Theologian

THE NEW THEOLOGIAN. *By Ved Mehta. Harper & Row. 217 pp. $5.95.*

GABRIEL VAHANIAN

Mr. Vahanian is associate professor of religion at Syracuse University. His newest book, No Other God, *has just been published. He is also the author of* The Death of God *(both Braziller).*

First published by *The New Yorker* in the fall of 1965, when the news of the death of God caught the Christian masses in theological slumber, this peripatetic essay had the audacious merit of turning theology not quite into a circus but at least into a sophisticated form of entertainment, meandering from anecdote to vignette, from table talk to speculation, and from God to Mehta's private disclosures about the problem that precisely God had become.

The result had a touch of piquancy and was especially commendable since it attempted to popularize the "agonizing reappraisal" of today's theological debates without doing violence to their integrity. And yet one had the feeling, now confirmed by the slightly amended book, that one must resist the mercurial brilliance of Mehta's performance.

This is not to say that his book does not intrigue us. But its brilliant sketches and its "travelogue" style confine it —as the title indicates—to the kind of men today's theologians are. Nor does the book come to grips with the radically new questions theology is raising, or is confronted by, in its attempt to survive in a world where the Christian faith seems to have become superfluous. Mehta's portrait of "the new theologian" is not without its own legitimate justification. But he overestimates his effect if he believes that he has elucidated the major problems simply by detonating a theological mini-bomb between two courses of a meal, or by connecting portraits by way of choice quotations—much as one might select an appropriate wine. The famous map of the United States, as viewed by a resident of New York, told a truth only by dislocating geography. Ved Mehta's view of contemporary theology stands in the same tradition.

The New Theologian thus begins with the sensational question raised by the celebrated Bishop John A. T. Robinson's title for an article published by *The Observer*, which became the apocalyptic "overture" of his 1963 best-selling book, *Honest to God.* The title was: "Our Image of God Must Go."

Robinson's thesis itself, of course, was not new. One can only wonder why it appeared to be so shocking, considering the extent to which the West has been de-Christianized, and that most people have long been living according to the implications of a *de facto* atheism. Many a theologian had in the past done exactly what Robinson seemed to advocate, though without sensationalism. What was new, however, was the confusion that followed when, on the authority of Tillich, Bultmann, and especially Bonhoeffer (the German theologian who was executed by the Nazis for his part in the plot to assassinate Hitler), the Bishop, followed by a host of "new theologians," seemed to be implying that not only our image but God himself must go.

What little Bonhoeffer wrote in his prison cell on the theme of God's superfluousness to modern man scarcely warrants the conception of a godless understanding of Jesus. It has nothing to do with the one thing that Robinson and his confreres share, i.e., a feeling of being more at ease with humanists or with atheists than with churchgoers. As far

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as that sort of argument goes, and taking into account the kind of world in which we live, Marxists who concede that some of their best friends are Christian seem much bolder.

Mehta's book deals with another theme borrowed from Bonhoeffer: "religionless Christianity." What Bonhoeffer meant by that phrase is not clear, since for him religion mainly signified what Christianity should *not* be or should *not* tolerate as its vehicle. He saw between Christianity and religion the same kind of opposition as the prophets of the Old Testament saw between loyalty to Yahweh and perfunctory sacrifices or ostentatious ritualism. In turn, we must remember that Bonhoeffer's phrase derives from the views of Karl Barth.

"Religionless Christianity" has become the shibboleth of the theological *nouvelle vague*, recalling theological debates about the number of angels that could stand on the head of a pin, while Byzantium was falling.

Mehta's lively book offers us a deception, for which he cannot be held entirely responsible, nor entirely blameless. After all, no matter how brilliant and versatile one is, a serious report on this subject based on interviews requires some technical competence and demands some preliminary homework. Some theologians can switch from their technical jargon to the language of the man on the street. Others can't, or won't. In this case, it is entirely up to the reporter to ask the complicated questions in such a way that they are simply formulated and elicit an equally simple answer. One has but to compare Mehta's interview of Rudolf Bultmann with the one published in *Der Spiegel*, an English version of which appeared recently in *Christianity and Crisis*. In the former we get the picture of a man who is over 80 years old, whose health is failing and who has practically completed his life's task, and states that all he has to say about "demythologizing" has already been said in his books. The man from *Der Spiegel*, suspecting that this was the case, had familiarized himself with Bultmann's thought so appropriately that he did produce a real interview. Mehta's conversations with Bultmann (mainly about the weather) are "prefaced" by a full page and a half of quotations as if to justify Mehta's trip to Marburg. Still, *The New Theologian* does introduce some of the best theologians of today and exposes the reader to some aspects of their controversial ideas. In a sense, it is a banquet of ideas.

However, like dining out in certain blue-law states, it is a feast which requires that you supply your own spirits.

ART / Max Kozloff

Although I've had occasion to discuss the paintings of Larry Poons with some frequency in the past, his latest work, at the Castelli Gallery, justifies opening the topic again. In a commentary that tries to isolate the most challenging or coherent abstraction, this artist, though an anguished, unproductive worker, keeps appearing insistently, and I think, deservedly. Like Pollock in formulating an exhilarating unique style, Poons has incurred no imitators—least of all, so far, himself. While the overall scheme of his art—giant fields of stained unitary color, incessantly pocked by multihued disks or ovals—has been maintained, its actual mechanics, and therefore, pictorial effect, seem to have reversed gear. Gone, for instance, are his high contrasts and steady beats. Absent too are the once prominent afterimages and the energized though staggered lines of force, the in-focus imagery, and the differentiated weight and texture of his elements. Where earlier there had been a wavering of pictorial forces as they competed with maximum stress in divergent directions,

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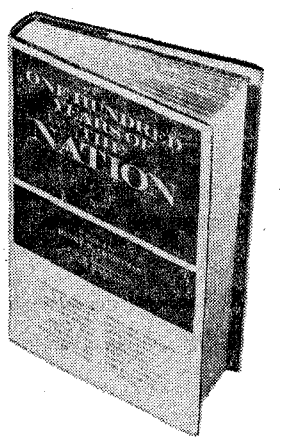

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now his whole syntax is recessive and understated, and the result is an intrinsic blurring of sensations. Once it was necessary to find some common denominator to his stratified, rather optical attacks; currently, one is required to hold on to their differences, lest they retreat still further into the muted fabric. Despite their environmental, wall-sized proportions, these paintings are striving to "get away," so that the best that can be done, for the moment, is to send analysis chivvying after them.

My first impression of the four canvases Poons is now showing was that they were, in a tricky sense, impossible to see. Close values alone did not explain this, nor did the oddly dim gallery lights. It may be that the pictures "bruise" easily in this light, which hitherto had seemed adequate for other work. Diffusion, a certain muzziness, a lack of resonance were the earliest perceptions, stemming, perhaps, from a half-conscious yearning of the eye to line into the freckled fields on the basis of a secure formal priority that did not exist. Such would account for my visual anxiety in these first moments. This, and the look of art that seemed highly structured, that appeared to be coming purposefully out at you—and didn't. Even the grand surfaces, uninflected as usual, seemed tinged by this contagious recession. Movement, here, was problematic, and light, finally, became almost involuntarily dead pan.

But the one agent that really has unmoored the experience is Poons's excessive reliance on secondary or weakly saturated color. If the field is not so characterized, then one can be assured that its punctuation is. The artist's palette always starts at some already degraded hue which at best recalls or refers to a primary, and then descends, for the most part, further away into various neutrals. It is sensuality in a minor mode—not quite pastel and still less tonal—but a definite taste for intermediate, sulkily off-key chromatics. In addition, Poons mingles the predictability and surprise of color in a disorienting combination. Each of his canvases is, on one hand, a set homogeneous pattern of color changes. His "Wildcat Arrival," for instance, fields a basic chromium oxide green, upon which there are notes of permanent and gray green, Indian red, bluish gray, and dull yellow ochre. And "Rosewood" distributes gray, brown and khaki yellows, various shades of coral, a light emerald, and whitened burnt siena on a mocha-beige ground. The chromatic environment, therefore, is delimited within a close harmonic range of the spectrum. But on the other hand, there are far more colors—scattered widely about in small proportions—to hold in the relating memory, than in any of his previous work. Low pressure changes of warm-cool are distended, or oscillate, and are made to seem to trespass each other's "territory." Then too, as a final touch, squinting hard, one notices the isolated bleatings of the odd color out.

This sheepish complexity of coloration, in which hues seem almost mathematically graded, then shuffled, overlaps a tentative spatial change that may have radical implications in Poons's art. He seems to be of two minds on the classic relation of figure and ground. Formerly, their interaction had been clear. Dots were figure; field was ground. The one lay distinctly and substantially upon the other. But now, in his green picture, there is only one translucent skin which has molecular apertures that hold a watery compound of differing tints. It is as if one is looking *through* and behind the surface at random intervals. As for the "Rosewood" canvas, the speckling elements have lost their discreteness of edge and purvey high-keyed aureoles that tend to bleed out against the ground. This looseness and openness are permissible only in work no deeper than mid-value, where the eye is still efficient in sensing contrasts. Way down with the blue-blacks of "Knoxville," Poons had to retain his physical distinctions in order to counter a gathering optical invisibility. Like most of his colleagues, Poons is not a painter of transitions, nor could he be said to be interested in spontaneity of execution. But this current work, if my intuition is right, shows him to be groping toward a surrogate of both. It is a fabulous enterprise—something like trying to find the square root of lyricism.

POEM

We have come to be saved. From a pest.
And so we are constructing.

From this altitude, it seems as though
we were swimming, rowing a boat.

Later, a girl named Julie grows up
in a blue dress. She walks past our perishable fort.

How new she looks! We hardly recognize
and in this we are ascending in the play.

I'm talking about the New Jersey shore,
her hands evidently excited, while the flag sinks.

"She held out her white hands
to us, but remained in the bitten world."

DAVID SHAPIRO

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